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**\$50,000 Reward;**

**THE ROMANCE OF A RUBY RING.**

A PHILADELPHIA HISTORY AND MYSTERY.

BY WM. MASON TURNER, M. D.

Author of "The Masked Miner," "Under Bail," "Silver Heels," etc., etc.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SOMETHING SERIOUS INTERRUPTED.

For a moment Wildfern gazed triumphantly at the quarry he had hunted down—the poor girl lying so motionless in the snow.

Then he stooped down and pressed to her nostrils a handkerchief saturated with an ether. Then, calling a passing carriage, he lifted the girl in his arms, bore her to the vehicle, and, whispering a few words to the driver, sprang in, and away they jolted.

The carriage dashed on as rapidly as possible over the snow-covered streets. The driver plied his whip vigorously—perhaps he knew the man who had employed him, well enough; this man paid well. So he forced his horses on ward through the snow, at a slashing gait.

Wildfern, clutching the form of the swooning girl in his arms, still held the saturated handkerchief over her nostrils.

And Sadie lay like one dead; she did not move, nor did the faintest quiver of eyelid or nostril indicate that life still lingered in the frame.

But the man was satisfied. He was on the road to triumph, so he thought.

At all events, he smiled grimly, triumphantly, to himself—there in that jolting carriage—for he felt Sadie Sayton's heart beating wildly against her well-fitting corset. Moreover, he knew the exact strength of the anesthetic, which he handled so boldly and confidently.

The carriage rumbled on. At length Locust street was reached.

Turning abruptly around the corner, the driver lashed his horses again, and rattled on at a greater speed than ever. Proceeding a few squares, the vehicle suddenly paused before a large double house on the north side. A light burned in the hallway of the dwelling, despite the late hour.

The driver did not stir from his box. Willis Wildfern reached out his hand and opened the door. Then, grasping the form of Sadie Sayton in his arms, he sprang out.

"Here, my man," he said, handing a note of considerable amount to the driver; "this for your speed." And, mark you well—you know me!—you have only been to the Baltimore depot to-night!"

"Exactly, captain; I know my business." The man touched his horses, and again the carriage jolted away. Turning into a neighboring cross-street, it was soon out of sight and hearing.

Wildfern, bearing the insensible girl in his arms, sprang up the broad marble steps, and, applying his hand to the bell, pulled vigorously three times.

Instantly the light glowing in the hall and shimmering through the transom-light over the door, was subdued. Then, hurrying feet echoed along the passage. But, though a hand was placed upon the knob inside, yet the door opened not, nor did the knob turn. A faint, peculiar rap, however, sounded on the panel.

Willis Wildfern immediately answered

this. Then another rap sounded on the door. The man's face wrinkled into a frown; but he returned the rap.

At last the door was opened; but even then it was caught by a short check-chain.

"Who comes?" asked a voice.

"It is I, Lady Maud," replied Wildfern, angrily. "Open at once and let me in out of the storm."

Then the door was closed for a moment; a chain rattled. Then the door swung open.

Wildfern entered with his burden and glanced around him.

"Ha! what's this, Willis Wildfern? What dark purpose do you now entertain?" asked the woman, harshly, though she gave way for the man to enter as she spoke.

The other made a sudden, imperative gesture. The woman understood it, for she half-covered, and then quickly shut the door.

"Mind your tongue, Lady Maud!" replied Wildfern, angrily, as he drew aside the saturated handkerchief, and let the light fall on the lovely face of the girl. "But, look at this beauty!" he continued. "Did you ever see one fairer, eh?"

"Wonderfully fair!" exclaimed the woman, involuntarily. "But, where did you find the poor thing, captain, and what are you going to do with the child? I hope—"

"Enough, Lady Maud; but now, come help me in with her. Then, maybe, I'll tell you all about it. You must keep her here for me."

The woman started, but, meeting the man's eye, bowed silently, saying nothing.

They passed on, and entered a brilliantly-lit parlor to the left—the man still carrying the girl in his arms. Then he laid her on a sofa. But he did not explain her insensible condition.

He whispered to the other.

"What now, captain?" and she stirred not.

"Do as I tell you—at once, too," growled the man.

"I tell you, Wildfern, I do not wish—"

"Go, Lady Maud! Do you brave me thus!" and he put his hand menacingly in his bosom.

The woman turned at once and left the room. In a few moments she was back.

She carried in her hands a large silk handkerchief, and a few feet of cord. But, her face was wrinkled darkly.

A moment and the handkerchief was tied loosely though securely over the girl's head. Then her soft wrists were bound with the cord. Between them, at once, the man and the woman bore the limp form along the dimly-lit hall—thence up stairs, out of sight.

Some ten minutes elapsed before the two returned.

Wildfern opened a door to the right of the passage, and entered a room as if he was perfectly at home. The woman followed him.

The apartment into which they entered was fitted up with a tasteful, costly elegance. Full-length mirrors reached from the ceiling to the richly-carpeted floor.

Paintings of wondrous tinting and shading—though perhaps rather broad in subject—adorned the walls. The atmosphere of the room was warm and genial.

"You certainly have comfort here, Lady Maud, thanks to me!" said the man.

"Thanks to our handy way of providing money, you had better say, my dear captain. And you know I am not altogether unserviceable. If I owe you anything I endeavor to pay it back by showing that I am grateful. Besides that, captain, and she sunk her voice to a whisper, as a glitter came to her eye. "I am well aware that a word from me would do! I would have but to breathe a single sentence, in the ear of a certain official about town, and you and Wild Tom would—"

"There! Enough, Lady Maud! you trifle with me—you threaten me, and there's no necessity," interrupted the man, starting. "More than that, my noble lady, if you are inclined, go ahead! You will be cutting your own throat. Ha! ha! And should you fail in doing that, you may as well remember that I am no pigmy, and can do certain things myself!"

These words were spoken fiercely and with a deep significance; and, as he uttered the last syllable, the man thrust his right hand into the breast-pocket of his coat.

The Lady Maud shuddered, and her ready face blanched as the words fell upon her ear. But she rallied and said laughingly:

"I did but joke, captain, and if I meant any thing, it was, that I do for you what would be a fair equivalent for the money you advance me. But," and her voice became serious, as if a sudden remembrance had flashed through her brain, "please remember, my friend, that I hold more than one secret of yours! I am not easily frightened."

Willis Wildfern, nor am I a child to deal with. I think this much can be matched against yours!" and, as she spoke, she flexed her right arm, and touched the swelling muscle with the tips of the fingers of her left hand.

The man drew back. He knew the Lady Maud of old; he knew that she was not to be trifled with, and that when her anger was thoroughly aroused, she was a dangerous woman to deal with—one who could take her own part, be it at cut-and-thrust or fist-cuff.

And Willis Wildfern, as he sat there, was thinking of an old-time scene in a dark room, when knives clashed in the silent air, and the bare boards were slippery with human gore.

He called back to his memory that scene with a shudder, and his bearded face grew white for a moment. But rallying himself he said, as a sickly smile flashed over his face:

"We will not quarrel, Lady Maud! Above all others, you and I should be friends. But, remember well: you hold me no tighter than I hold you—for I saw the blow given that night, late—"

"Ah! And did I not, Willis Wildfern, in this very house, see other blows given? Did I not see a bleeding, ghastly body carried down those stairs there! Ah! well you may

shudder! And can not the old covered well in the yard tell a secret! Ay! between you and Wild Tom—"

"Stop, woman, or, by heavens, I'll make you!" And as he uttered these angry words in a low, hissing voice, the man sprang to his feet, and drew from his bosom a long, keen knife. In a moment he advanced toward the other.

But the Lady Maud was not slow in meeting his attack. Like lightning she was upon her feet; and then the blue, highly-tempered barrel of a pistol flashed in the room, and the woman's finger was pressing the creaking trigger.

The man paused; then suddenly he stooped for a spring, and—

At that moment the door-bell sounded sharp and clear through the quiet mansion.

## CHAPTER IX.

A STARTLING SIGHT.

But the hideous face disappeared quickly from the window; and then the snow whirled down furiously against the filmy panes. The wind roared around the old house, and sighed and moaned along the streets, and up the alleys.

Frank Hayworth had started when his eyes fell upon the dark, scowling, diabolical face at the window. And then a frown wrinkled his brow.

A black memory, blacker than the ominous countenance that was pressed against the rattling sash, rushed over him. He remembered well one dark night of storm and lightning, in Fairmount Park, he singly stood between a defenseless girl and two swarthy men bent on evil intent; he remembered that, as the lightning glared through the dark glades of the park, his eyes had fallen upon a face, a black face—the face of a very fiend!

And just now, he had seen the same horrible countenance at the window of that lonely house. But, when he looked again, he saw nothing.

Laying the swooning girl gently upon an old lounge, the young man sprang to the window, flung up the rickety sash, and, leaning forth, peered out in the thick gloom.

Far down the street, dimly showing, the form of a man was speeding away. Then it had gone from sight.

Frank Hayworth looked below. He started as he saw the old shutter to a window of a story under him swinging to and fro. In an instant he knew how the bold intruder had clambered up.

The young man lowered the sash at once, and turned again into the room.

The physician, who had been leaning over the girl, now arose, and putting on his overcoat, drew up his hat and gloves.

Then he looked near to Frank Hayworth, and said, in an undertone, "sir, but, somebody must stay here with the poor girl to-night. How can it be arranged?"

The actor pondered for a moment; but, then looking up suddenly, said, quietly:

"I can arrange it, doctor; I will stay myself."

For an instant the physician glanced at him who spoke; in that glance was something—however faint—of suspicion.

"Can you not get some other person too—a woman—Mr. Hayworth? Agnes Hope is a young girl; and you two all alone in this old house—"

"I understand you, doctor," interrupted the other, sternly. "Let me assure you, I love Agnes Hope only as—as a sister, and as such would respect and defend her."

Frank Hayworth had hesitated somewhat as he uttered these words; a quail of conscience half-sicken him, as a catechising question—"Is it true what I am saying?"—flashed through his bosom. But he said nothing else just then.

The shade of suspicion passed from the physician's face, and he answered:

"You have a good heart, Mr. Hayworth, and you will be rewarded! And, now, please attend to the funeral arrangements, at your earliest convenience. We are the only friends the poor girl has, and we must not desert her. And, yes, the funeral had better be as soon as possible."

"Exactly, doctor. To-morrow afternoon, under the circumstances, will not be too soon, I think. What say you?"

"Will do," and I will be here then. And, Mr. Hayworth," the physician sunk his voice still lower as he spoke, "if—there is anything in the shape of money—why, sir, my purse is—"

"God bless you, doctor! I have some means myself, and Agnes has her wages. But, should we need any thing, we will not scruple to take advantage of your kind offer."

"Then, good-night, sir," replied the physician, shaking the actor's hand. "I must now be going; I will see you to-morrow."

Turning at once, the humane gentleman said a soft, sympathizing good-night to Agnes, and in a moment more had disappeared.

Frank Hayworth and Agnes Hope were left alone in the chamber of death.

The young man gazed for a moment at the girl in silence; then, recovering himself, walked to the lounge on which she sat, and taking her hand gently in his, said:

"You must sleep, Agnes; you are wearied and faint. Sit in the chair there, for a moment, and I will wheel the lounge into the next room and arrange it for you. Do not object. I can do it, and you must sleep, or you'll be sick yourself. There, sit down," he said, as the girl, after feebly objecting, arose to her feet, and sat down in the chair near the bed.

Frank Hayworth at once pushed the lounge from the chamber into the neighboring room. He was absent but a few moments when he returned softly, and said:

"'Tis ready, Agnes; now go in and sleep. I will remain here all night, and watch."

Without replying, but with a look of deep gratitude, Agnes Hope arose, and walked into the next room.

Then Frank Hayworth, his hands behind him, his face serious with thought, began to promenade slowly the limits of the carpetless floor.

The minutes and hours sped by, and still the actor walked this chamber of death. Thought upon thought was flashing through his brain; in his memory he was traveling backward over the broad highway of time—that road at one time strewn with garlands and fringed with wild roses and daisies, loading the happy sun-lit air with their ravishing aroma; that way, again, dark and gloomy—swept by fiery storms—the roses withered—the garlands a crisp—and the murky atmosphere heavy with noxious vapors!

The actor paused as a shudder swept over his frame. A feeling of awe, which he could not drive away, crept apace over Frank Hayworth as he paused there, and, bending his head, listened to the wild storm raging without.

Involuntarily he turned and glanced at the ghastly object on the bed.

A look of very horror sprang to his face as he saw what was revealed.

The young man looked again.

Uttering a half-cry of fright, and while his eyes seemed to start from their sockets—his tongue cleaving to his mouth—his forehead bathed in sudden sweat—his face blanched—his nostrils quivering, Frank Hayworth staggered wildly back, and, clutching in the air for support, sunk with a moan upon a chair.

## CHAPTER X.

AT TONY'S.

Willis Wildfern paused as the startling jingle of the bell rung in the room.

Glaring at the angry woman who stood before him, he placed his knife slowly out of sight, and said:

"It is very well, Lady Maud, that we were interrupted in our little game! Perhaps when we can spare our services to one another, we can take up the battle again; but not now. You are useful to me as I am to you. So put up your pistol, and we'll be friends. But hark you, Lady Maud! I please forget old things for the future; it is best for the health of both of us!"

The woman half-sneered, as she replied:

"Be it as you say, Captain Wildfern! But all I wish you to understand is, that I hold you as tightly by the throat as you do me; and that I am well able and always prepared to defend myself. But, as you say, we'll be friends now. Wait a moment until I answer the bell. Ha! there it is again; and whoever pulls it is in earnest."

As she spoke, she placed the pistol back in her bosom, and casting a half-suspicious glance at Wildfern, turned abruptly and opened the door leading into the passage-way.

The man gazed after her with a scowl; but his face suddenly lighted up with a smile, and he chuckled low to himself as he muttered:

"I must propitiate the old tigress! For I have game in her keeping! I have a wife in sight! And gold—her gold! It shall pay me in full! Yes, I was born under a lucky star, and—"

Just then the door-bolt turned, and the Lady Maud re-entered the apartment, a frown upon her face.

"You are wanted, captain; trouble is in the wind!" she said, at once, flinging herself into a chair, and glancing at the man she addressed.

Wildfern's face grew white.

"Well, what is it, Lady Maud?"

"The presses are in danger! Wild Tom is at the door; he brings the news."

"The devil! Let him come in, and—"

"Let Wild Tom come in! Are you crazy, Willis Wildfern? I am a match for either of you, singly, but I'll not trust you both together."

The woman spoke very decidedly, as a deep, vindictive fire shot from her eyes.

The man's face grew black with an ominous frown. His eyes sparkled with an angry flash, and he bit his lip. But he was mentally disturbed; he did not like the news just brought. It was clear he understood it, whatever it was. So, as he laughed grimly, he said:

"You are too suspicious, my friend; you do not trust me as far as I do you. Perhaps 'tis the fear of a guilty conscience," and he sneered in her face.

The woman winced; her face paled; but, quickly recovering herself, she said, quietly:

"That is not a matter of argument just now. Even if it was, I fancy Wild Tom's news is of too important a nature to allow us time to wrangle about something or nothing, which may some day, my dear captain, be settled to our mutual satisfaction, in blood!"

The last words were spoken with a sudden vehemence, and the woman waved the man half-fiercely toward the door.

Wildfern did not answer; but turning, he left the room, and hastened to the front door. He was gone several minutes.

When he returned, his face was wrinkled into a fresh frown of vexation, and an anxious expression shone in his every feature.

"I must be gone, Lady Maud, and at once," he said, hurriedly; "Tom's intelligence is important; the office must be moved, and to-night. Confound the bad luck! I thought if there was a safe place in Philadelphia, we had found it."

"Where now will you go, captain?" asked the woman.

"To our same old place, I suppose: the vault at Laurel Hill. That is safe, at all



events; but it is inconveniently far, and Tom dislikes the place. He is superstitious, and is fond of seeing a ghost or bogle about every other night in the week! But I'll keep him up to the work, or I'll cut his throat!"

"Exactly, captain; that must be the alternative, for Wild Tom knows some dark tales of you," and the woman smiled.

The man made no reply; he busied himself in putting on his overcoat. Then, taking his hat, he said:

"Take good care of the girl up-stairs, Lady Maid. If she escapes, by heaven! I'll—but no matter! You know me. Let me whisper in your ear: *that girl is to be my wife!* Do you understand? And you are to help me. I'll tell you all as soon as I can. Of course you know that a roll of a few hundred dollars comes in handy at times—eh?"

"Ay! and whenever I wish it, my dear captain! And without such questionable work as this last!" and the woman smiled scornfully.

"I do not contradict you," replied the other, quickly; "but I will report to you soon. And now, good-night, and don't forget what I told you, *if you value your health!*"

Another moment, and, in company with a tall, gigantic negro, he was hurrying away toward Shippen street. Here they paused and glanced around them in every direction. Not a human being was in sight. The lustrous guardians of the night were nowhere to be seen. Perhaps they had retreated before the storm, and were warming their chilled hands, against rules, in some neighboring groggery or restaurant?

"The coast is clear, Tom," said Wild-fern, in a low voice. "We'll go to Tom's and change. Then we can have a talk and arrange matters. I tell you, Tom, we must work to-night! and, if necessary, with edged tools!"

"Exactly, marse cap'n! I understands you, and I'm willing!"

"Well, then, come along; the night is passing, and such a night!"

So saying he hurried across the street, and, turning, proceeded up Shippen for some distance. At length the men paused before a low house, with a gloomy, dingy exterior. Not a light was visible, and from this fact, and the silent, deserted look it bore, it was fair to surmise that the dwelling was untenanted.

But, Willis Wildfern thought otherwise; for, glancing around him, he suddenly stopped, and brushed away the snow at his feet, until he came to some boards. It was the cellar-cap.

The man knelt down at once and placed his ear to a crevice in the planking. He smiled with a grim satisfaction as he arose to his feet.

He had heard sounds coming from the cellar. "Tony is well-patronized to-night, Tom; listen," said Wildfern.

Sure enough, in the lulls of the wind faint sounds of tinkling tumblers, and swells of songs and boisterous laughter could be heard.

And the negro smiled, too, as he said in reply:

"Yes, cap'n, I hears 'em! 'Tis all the better for us, if Tony has a large house. But, what if some of dem meddlesome policemen is down dar by the store?"

The other started and hesitated. The suggestion set him to thinking. He paused for a moment.

"You know, marse cap'n, we're known to most on 'em in our working-gear; and you knows, too, we can't go in dat cellar dressed in any thing else."

"You're right, Tom," said Wildfern, slowly. "But, we must go in there and fix our plans, for we can not go elsewhere at this time of night. So, come along. If worst comes—why, Tom, we've been in scrapes before. We'll trust to luck and muscle! Come!"

"All right, marse cap'n; go ahead; I can 'weed my row,' dat's sure!" Wildfern again looked around him; but, as he saw no one, he turned at once and disappeared up a narrow alley, leading between the two adjoining houses.

The negro followed close behind him. Cautiously they felt their way along the cold, wet walls bordering the narrow passage. Then they stood in an open space—a small yard now covered with snow.

Wildfern, who seemed perfectly at home, did not pause, but crossing over to a back-building, rapped on a door.

His rap was a peculiar one. At first it awakened no response; but, on being repeated, the door was opened softly, and a pair of keen black eyes flashed out on those who knocked.

The light from within the room shone through the crevice made by opening the door, and revealed those who stood without. Then the door was opened wider, and a small, short, thick-set fellow, with jet-black hair and glittering eyes appeared.

"Ah! 'tis ze capitaine! I very much please to see him. *Entrez, entrez, capitaine!*" and he gave way for the two to pass.

"Yes, Tony, 'tis I. Glad to see you. But, Tony, show us to my room—my comrade and I. Then we'll go down to the 'palace,' and Wildfern, followed by Tom, pushed through the door into the more congenial atmosphere of indoors.

Antoine, or Tony, as he was known, with a bow led his guests through the well-lighted room—first seeing, however, that the door was secured.

The light streaming down revealed Tom, the gigantic negro, fully.

His dress did not correspond with the rude, unpolished language which fell from his lips. Broadcloth of the costliest kind covered his stalwart person, as could be seen; for he had thrown aside his overcoat. Warm, fleece-lined, neatly-fitting gloves incased his hands, and a hat of the latest fashion sat on his large, matted head. A heavy gold guard dangled from the button-hole of his vest, and in the bosom of his spotless shirt-front sparkled a stone.

Physically speaking, the man was a noble specimen of his species. As tall as was Willis Wildfern, still, when he stood beside the swarthy negro, the former looked absolutely dwarfish.

But, there was something in the face of this giant which marred the splendor of his towering form. Perhaps the reader will learn this defect before the last page of this veracious narrative is completed.

In a moment, however, they had passed through the room, and, still escorted by Tony, disappeared in the apartment beyond.

Several moments passed ere they came forth again; and when they did no one would have known them—at least, the white man.

They hurried, however, through the room which they had first entered, and going on into a passage, disappeared down a dark stairway.

The "palace" of Tony, so called by Wildfern, was not a palace, as we would interpret the word. Far from it. It was nothing more than a "groggery." A long counter, and back of it a flashing array of cheap glassware, with a background of dingy, solferino paper, made that mythical temple—the bar. At this shrine stood at least a score of rough fellows, in every stage of dilapidation—some quaffing the fourpenny glasses of liquor there dispensed; others bent over the counter, and asleep; others leaning against it for support.

The room seemed like a baker's oven; and, to add to the stench of the prevailing atmosphere, a dozen or so half-drunken creatures, seated around the red-hot stove, were regaling themselves with the pipe.

Willis Wildfern paid no heed to any one, but, followed by his stalwart companion, strode through the motley crowd to a table in a further corner of the room. He sat down; his comrade did the same. Then Wildfern rapped loudly on the table. In a moment Tony, who had now come down to superintend affairs, was at the table.

"What will ze capitaine have?" asked he.

"Sh! sh! Tony. Be guarded." No "captain" here, and Wildfern looked him sternly in the face.

"Ten thousand pardons, monsieur le capitaine—I mean, sir."

"Very good, Tony; don't forget. But, bring me brandy; and, hark you, my man, good brandy, or I'll make you drink it."

"Certainly—certaintement, cap—sir! You are very droll! Ha! ha!" and with this the man hurried off.

He was gone but a few minutes when he returned, bringing the desired liquid.

"Here it is, sir; real Portuguese—*excellent!*"

The man, Wildfern, took the bottle, and without placing any credit in Tony's words, took out the cork, and passed the vessel knowingly, backward and forward, beneath his nose for a moment.

"Good, Tony; for once you are right. Here's the score." As he spoke he drew from his pocket a bank-note and flung it upon the table.

The Frenchman picked up the money and glanced suspiciously at it.

"Good, Tony; good as gold."

"Yes, yes, cap—sir! If you say so."

"I do say so; and, Tony, keep the change," said Wildfern, as a satisfied look came over his face.

Then Tony hurried away again.

Pouring out a huge draught, Wildfern gulped it down without breathing; and then, with an approving smack of his lips, he shoved the bottle toward the other.

The negro helped himself bountifully likewise.

"Now, Tom, tell me all about this bad piece of business," said Wildfern; "it has annoyed me no little."

"Yes, sir. Well, you see, sir, as I was coming out of the 'office' I see'd a policeman hanging around the place. I tried to git away but the fellow had his eye upon me. Den he was soon up by me, and he said: 'Do you live in dat house, my man?'

I said no; den he said dat he would—Hullo! what de debbil is dat?" suddenly exclaimed the negro, as the tramping of many feet was heard.

Then came a crash at the door.

Wildfern and Tom sprung to their feet. (To be continued—Commenced in No. 25.)

FACTS COMPARATIVE.—To the traveler the well-known but vaguely accepted fact that height and distance are only comparative becomes a realization. Mount Wash-

ington is thought of great altitude, here at the East, and on it there is no vegetation. But the Pacific Railroad runs for hundreds of miles at a greater elevation, and through a country by no means barren; and in South America there are thickly inhabited regions at more than twice the altitude.

Numerous large towns may be found there ten thousand feet above the sea; still small villages sustain themselves at still greater heights.

## ANGELINE.

BY J. BLACKETT.

Other lads sing of their lasses,  
Of their lasses vain and gay,  
Decked with bogus gems and brasses,  
Light as butterflies in May;  
But I'll sing you of a maiden,  
One in whom true virtues shine,  
Virtues that make earth an Eden,  
She's my dearest Angeline.

Chorus.  
She is pretty, sweet and witty,  
And her heart is pledged to mine;  
Blithe and merry as a fairy  
Is my dearest Angeline!

Other lads may have their lasses,  
On whom they doat with delight,  
To whose beauties they devote their glasses,  
On their club's convivial night.  
But my own would scorn the favor,  
Spoken by the wretch that sips  
Alcohol of any flavor.  
Through his sin-polluted lips. (Chorus.)

Oh! that all our blooming lasses  
(In the cause of virtue) would  
Frown on fashion's vice-stained glasses,  
And reserve their smiles for good.  
More of social grace would bless us,  
Woman would be more divine,  
And to man a deal more precious—  
Even as my Angeline. (Chorus.)

## The Scarlet Hand:

OR,

The Orphan Heiress of Fifth Avenue.

A STORY OF NEW YORK HEARTS AND HOMES.

BY ALBERT W. AIKEN,

AUTHOR OF "THE AGE OF SPADES," ETC.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

SPRINGING THE TRAP.

LAWYER CHUBBET drove Blanche up the avenue, then into Harlem lane, taking in Central Park on the way.

Being a beautiful afternoon the road was gay with dashing teams—brilliant with youth and beauty.

As they drove along, the old lawyer shrewdly questioned Blanche to discover if she was in love with any one. He had an idea that she might have seen some one that she preferred to Allyne. If that was so, it would easily explain why she was so resolute not to fulfill the engagement. But, after a series of skillfully put questions, Chubbet became satisfied that she was heart-free, and that she had given her only reason for not wishing to become the wife of Strathroy.

They drove over King's bridge, and went a short distance beyond, then turned, and, crossing the bridge again, drove toward the Hudson river.

"By the way, my dear Miss Blanche, I have an old friend, who lives a short distance from here, that I should like to call upon, if you have no objections," Chubbet said, in his usual bland way.

"Oh, no, I have no objections," she replied.

"It's Doctor Fondell, a very able man, indeed, though he has retired from active practice now," explained the lawyer. "I think, by the way, now that we are going to visit the doctor, I shall ask him to give me a prescription for you; something to bring the color back into your cheeks again. Don't you think that is a good idea, eh?"

"Yes," replied Blanche, a faint smile coming to her lips.

"Egad!" cried Chubbet, merrily, "I think that it is an excellent idea. I shall have to carry it out."

"If you think that it will do any good, do so, by all means," said Blanche, who had little faith in any remedy known to the professors of the healing art, to cure the heart-ache that had stolen the roses from her cheeks and furrowed her fair brow with lines of care.

"Here we are," said Chubbet, as he drew up the grays in front of a house half hid by trees.

The house sat some hundred paces back from the road, and was surrounded by quite an extensive garden, filled with shrubbery. The garden was in turn surrounded by a high brick wall, that gave an air of seclusion to the place and grounds.

As the carriage halted before the gate, a tall, robust-looking gentleman of forty or forty-five, with a long, red beard, and slightly bald, came out. He was bare-headed, as though he had just come out for a stroll through the garden.

"Why, Mr. Chubbet," he cried, warmly, as he advanced; "this is a pleasure."

The lawyer descended to the ground and assisted Blanche to alight.

"This is Doctor Fondell, Blanche," he said. "Miss Blanche Maybury—Doctor Fondell."

"I am truly delighted to have the pleasure of making your acquaintance, Miss Maybury," said the doctor, bowing profoundly.

"We were out for a drive—Miss Blanche is not very well—and I thought that as we were passing, we would just call in for a moment," said the lawyer.

"I am glad that you have done so," said the doctor, with an air of great cordiality. "Pray step into the house."

"Certainly," replied the lawyer.

The doctor led the way through the garden into the house and conducted them to a pleasant-looking apartment on the second floor.

"Will you allow me to offer you a glass of native wine after your ride—some of my own make—not strong, but quite re-

freshing?" the doctor said, in his smooth way.

"If it will not give you too much trouble," Blanche replied.

"Trouble?" cried the doctor; "not the least in the world. Besides, you are under my care now, and I prescribe it for you, and of course you must obey your doctor."

"Yes, Miss Blanche," said Chubbet, "while you are under the doctor's roof, of course you are under his charge and must obey him. Ha—ha!"

"Of course," replied Blanche, smiling. "I shall be very obedient."

"I will get you your wine, Miss Blanche," said the doctor, about to leave the room.

"Stop a minute, doctor," cried Chubbet. "I would like to see that famous wine-cellar that you have spoken of so often; that is, if Miss Blanche will permit me to leave her alone for a few minutes," and he bowed gallantly to the young girl.

"Oh, yes," replied Blanche.

"For the present, then, good-by," and Chubbet followed the doctor out, and they closed the door behind them.

"Won't she be apt to get out?" asked the lawyer, after the door had closed.

"Oh, no!" replied the doctor, smiling, and showing his white teeth. "The door is locked already. It is a spring lock, fastens with a catch, and opens from the outside only. She is already in her cage."

"You have it capitally arranged here," said the old lawyer, in admiration.

"Pretty well—pretty well," replied the doctor, with an air of satisfaction.

"I don't know whether we will be able to persuade her into the marriage or not," said the lawyer, thoughtfully.

"You may rely upon it that you will not," said the doctor, in his smooth, soft voice, that bore a disagreeable resemblance to the purring of a cat.

"You think not?"

"Yes. When a young, high-spirited girl, of the style of Miss Blanche, makes up her mind not to marry a man, she is apt to hold to her resolution."

"Then we must do without her consent!" said the lawyer, after thinking for a moment.

"Exactly. When you get ready to have the marriage take place, notify me, and I will put Miss Blanche into such a condition that if she will not say yes, she can not say no."

"How can you do that?"

"By means of a drug, administered in her wine or in her tea. I will answer for its success," said the doctor, with one of his smooth smiles, that were so full of meaning.

"Very well. I will let you know in ample time," said the lawyer.

Then the two went down-stairs; drank a glass of wine together, and Chubbet, getting into his carriage, drove off.

"I think that was very neatly performed," he said, with an air of great satisfaction.

The doctor watched his visitor depart; then taking a glass of wine, proceeded upstairs.

He found Blanche seated exactly as he had left her. Indeed, she had not stirred. Alone, her thoughts were full of gloomy images.

"Here is the wine, my dear," said the doctor, handing her the glass. "Drink; it will do you good."

Blanche drank the wine, mechanically, while the doctor sat down by her side.

"You do not seem to be well. Will you permit me to examine your pulse?" he asked.

Without a word, Blanche extended her hand to him.

"As I expected," he said, after a moment. "My dear, you are quite unwell."

"Yes; but, doctor, it is more mental than physical illness," she said.

"Exactly, my dear; and I trust that, after being a few days under my care, you will improve both mentally and physically. I hope you are pleased with your room here?"

"With my room?" questioned Blanche, in wonder.

"Yes, with your room. Here is your bedroom," and the doctor opened a door in the left wall. "There is the bell. If you wish for anything, ring for it. Your meals will be sent to your room."

Blanche began to think that either she was in a horrid dream, or that she was talking with a lunatic.

"Why, what do you mean, sir?" she cried; "and where is Mr. Chubbet?"

"He is now on his way to the city."

"Without me?"

"Certainly, my dear young lady. His object in coming was to leave you here."

"I can not understand this!" exclaimed Blanche in horror.

"Why it is plain enough, my dear. Your health is affected; your friends feared for you. They thought that you needed rest and quiet more even than a physician's care, and so they have placed you under my treatment. Were you not aware of this?" asked the doctor, in affected amazement.

"No, sir," replied Blanche, unable as yet to guess the full extent of the trap into which she had fallen.

"That is strange," said the doctor, as if astonished at the circumstance, "but I understand it now; they did not wish to excite you, and thought, I suppose, that the explanation had better come from me."

"Not wish to excite me?" repeated Blanche, "what is the meaning of this?"

"Why, my dear child, you are subject to

fits of insanity, and your friends have placed you under my care until you recover your reason."

"I insane?" exclaimed Blanche, springing to her feet in alarm; "oh, I guess it now! And your house is—"

"A private lunatic asylum," replied the doctor.

For a moment Blanche stood like one stunned. She had not foreseen this blow. Too late the truth came to her. She was in the hands of daring and unscrupulous men, who would not hesitate to use any means to accomplish their purpose.

"And do you believe that I am not in my right senses?" she asked, looking the doctor straight in the eye.

"Yes, my dear, I can see it in your eyes plainly."

Poor Blanche was in terrible hands.

### CHAPTER XXIV.

"WHEN GREEK MEETS GREEK," ETC.

LYSANDER CHUBBET had just entered his office, returning from lunch. He had eaten heartily and felt at peace with himself and all the world.

Drawing his cushioned chair to the window, he sat down and lit a fragrant cigar, prepared for an hour or so of uninterrupted enjoyment.

But as the old saying hath it, "Man proposes and fate disposes." No sooner had lawyer Chubbet lit his cigar and settled down comfortably in his chair, than he was disturbed by a knock at the door.

"Come in," said the lawyer, rather annoyed at being disturbed, and his annoyance was not diminished when the door opened and Timothy Weisel, the notorious, if not celebrated, legal gentleman from Center street, entered.

Mr. Chubbet was tolerably well acquainted with the Tombs lawyer, both personally and by reputation, and if there was a member of the legal fraternity that Lysander Chubbet despised thoroughly, it was Timothy Weisel.

"Good-day, Mr. Chubbet," said the pettifogger, with a profound bow.

"Good-day, sir," said Chubbet, very cold and distant.

"Pleasant day, sir," said the other.

"Very," replied Chubbet, shortly and dryly, at the same time wondering what on earth Weisel wanted with him.

"I hope you are enjoying good health, Mr. Chubbet?" said Weisel, with another bow.

"Tolerable, sir," responded Chubbet, dryer than ever, and wondering why Weisel didn't state his business.

"I am glad to hear it. The illness of such a man as yourself, Mr. Chubbet, would be a great blow to the profession of which you are an honored, and I am unworthy, member," said the Tombs lawyer, pathetically, and with another profound bow.

Within himself Chubbet shuddered when this speech fell upon his ears. He knew the pettifogger well, and understood that this politeness was but the prelude to an attack, something as the prize-fighters shake hands before pounding each other into jelly.

Rapidly the old lawyer ran his thoughts into the past few years. He could not remember a single circumstance with which the seedy-dressed legal gentleman, who had called upon him, could possibly have any connection.

"He means mischief, I know; but about what?" thought the lawyer.

Weisel, finding that Chubbet did not reply, went on in his speech.

"Permit me to offer my congratulations that your health is good, Mr. Chubbet," said Weisel, with another profound bow.

"Would it be taking too great a liberty if I took a chair and sat down in your office, Mr. Chubbet?" asked the little lawyer, in an extremely deferential tone.

"Well, if you have business," said the old lawyer, crustily.

"I have, Mr. Chubbet; business of great importance, Mr. Chubbet," and the wily little fellow glided into a chair, rather than sat down in it. "And it gives me great pleasure, Mr. Chubbet, when I think that the nature of that business will bring me into contact—I may say, daily contact—with a gentleman so renowned in the legal profession as yourself, Mr. Chubbet."

Chubbet felt a cold shudder run all over him. He knew very well that he did not deserve the high encomiums which the pettifogger was bestowing upon him; and he took it as a warning of danger.

"Well, sir, your business?" Chubbet said, abruptly.

"Certainly. I suppose that you have not forgotten that one Clinton Strathroy disappeared some twenty or more years ago."

"Of course not," replied Chubbet, who couldn't imagine what the other was after in dragging up the mysterious disappearance of Clinton Strathroy.

"This Clinton Strathroy was worth at the time of his sudden disappearance some hundred thousand dollars."

"Yes," replied Chubbet, "there or thereabouts."

"I accept the correction, Mr. Chubbet," said Weisel, with another profound bow. "One hundred thousand dollars—there or thereabouts. Well." Here Weisel coughed as if to clear his throat, while Chubbet watched him in blank amazement. "You were, I believe, Mr. Strathroy's lawyer?"

"Yes."

"You hold the same position in regard to his son, known as Allyne Strathroy?"





"Yes," again said Chubbet, who was beginning to get impatient, and who couldn't, for the life of him, see the drift of these questions.

"Now, I am about to state a few facts. If I am wrong in any of them—if my facts are not facts—please correct me."

"But I don't see the reason—"

"Excuse me, my dear Mr. Chubbet," interrupted Weisel, in his most insinuating voice. "If you will only have patience for a few minutes you will see the reason. Believe me, I should not take up the time—the valuable time of so eminent a practitioner as yourself, without good and sufficient reason. Now for my facts. Some time after Clinton Strathroy's disappearance, the belief became general that he was dead. Continued advertisements did not produce him, either living or dead. Clinton Strathroy left a will. In due time—in the belief that he was dead—that will was admitted to probate. Under that will Allyne, the son of Clinton Strathroy and Virginia, his wife—formerly Virginia Courtmay, of Charleston, South Carolina—inherited all his father's property. Have I been in error in any of my statements?"

"No, sir," replied Chubbet, who began to believe that his visitor was under the influence of liquor or crazy in dragging up all these old facts. "These things, sir, I presume, are familiar to all that know anything about the Strathroy family at all."

"Exactly," said Weisel, slowly and reflectively. "Then I haven't made any mistakes in my statements?"

"No, sir," said Chubbet, impatiently. He began to wish his visitor at the bottom of the East river, or, in fact, anywhere out of his office.

"By the way, I don't suppose that you have a copy of the will of Clinton Strathroy—under which this son, Allyne, inherits his father's property—handy, have you?" said Weisel, suddenly.

Chubbet stared at the odd question.

"Of course not, sir," he answered, impatiently. "Why should I keep a copy of the will? The affair was all settled up years ago, and young Mr. Allyne put in possession of his father's property."

"Of the property supposed to be left to him by this will, that I have spoken of?" said Weisel.

"Are you out of your senses, sir?" asked Chubbet, indignantly. "There is no supposition about it. The estate was left, without any reservation whatever, to this son—his only son, Allyne Strathroy."

"His only son—ah! um!" and Weisel looked in a mysterious way at Chubbet, who instantly cast his eyes about him for a weapon, for he really began to think that he was talking with a lunatic.

"Then you haven't a copy of the will?"

"No, sir."

"Luckily I have," said Weisel, in a dry way, as he drew from his pocket a paper, much to Chubbet's astonishment, who couldn't possibly conceive what any one could want of a copy of Strathroy's will, when the estate had been settled up years before.

"I suppose you will remember, when I read this paper, whether it is a true copy of the will or not?" the Tombs lawyer said.

"I should rather think so, sir, considering that I drew the original will out." Chubbet now began to have a curiosity to find out the reason for all this—to him—extraordinary proceeding.

Weisel unfolded the paper.

"First comes the usual, 'sound mind, etc.," began Weisel; "then a list of his property, and then the bequest, 'to my eldest son, Allyne Strathroy.' Is that correct?"

"Quite correct," replied Chubbet.

"Ah—why did Strathroy say my eldest son? he had but one—did he?" asked Weisel.

"A mere figure of speech, that's all. The will is perfectly clear," said Chubbet, still in a maze.

"Never has been disputed, eh?"

"Of course not."

"Can't be disputed, eh?"

"Decidedly not."

"Then all Allyne Strathroy had to do was to prove his identity as Allyne Strathroy, the eldest son of Clinton Strathroy, and take possession of the Strathroy estate?"

"Exactly."

"And Allyne Strathroy did do this, and now holds the estate?"

"Precisely."

"There is no flaw whatever in this will, then?"

"None at all."

"Suppose, for instance, that Clinton Strathroy had had another son, but not born in wedlock, a year or so younger than this Allyne, would his claim be worth anything—could he break this will?"

"Why, what nonsense you are talking!" cried Chubbet, impatiently. "What is the use of asking such foolish questions! You know, as well as I do, that this will is perfect."

"Well, yes, I thought so," said Weisel, a singular smile playing around the corners of this thin-lipped mouth. "But I had a curiosity to know your opinion upon the subject."

"Well, sir, you have it. The will can not be broken if Clinton Strathroy had one natural son or fifty natural sons. Allyne's right under this will can not be disputed."

Then a sudden ray of light illuminated the lawyer's mind. "I suppose that this natu-

ral son of Clinton Strathroy that you speak of does really exist, and that you represent him?"

"Oh, bless you, no," said Weisel. "There is a natural son, but I'm retained on the other side."

"The other side! What other side?"

"In the case of Allyne Strathroy vs. Allyne Strathroy."

"What do you mean?" said Chubbet, in astonishment.

"That Clinton Strathroy had two sons, both named Allyne. One born in Charleston, South Carolina, on the 20th of January, 1847; the other born in New York, on the 25th of November, 1847; the second Allyne just ten months younger than the first Allyne. Not only that, but Clinton Strathroy married the mother of the second child, Virginia Courtmay, while his first wife, Lizzie Duke, was still alive. The will says, 'my eldest son, Allyne Strathroy.' You have just informed me that there can not be a doubt in regard to the will standing, even though there were fifty natural sons. I represent Allyne Strathroy, the elder—the legitimate son; you act for Allyne Courtmay—not Strathroy—for he has no right to his father's name—the usurper."

Chubbet gazed at Weisel utterly helpless.

## CHAPTER XXV.

A BARGAIN BETWEEN TWO RASCALS.

FOR a few minutes Chubbet remained silent, apparently speechless, and looked at the wily Tombs lawyer. On his countenance consternation was visible.

At last Chubbet regained his speech.

"Why, your infernal scoundrel!" he cried.

"What? what is that you say?" demanded Weisel, bristling up and preparing to show fight.

"Take care, sir, how you asperse my character!"

"Your character!" cried Chubbet, surveying the little lawyer with a look which he intended to render withering in its indignation. But the look had no effects whatever on Weisel. He was one not to be "withered" easily.

"Yes, my character!" repeated Weisel.

"You never had any character!" cried Chubbet, naturally angry at being "pumped" in the complete and scientific manner that he had been by the pettifogger.

"I've as much character as you, ever had!" exclaimed Weisel, who was not to be bullied.

"Your character—bah!" cried Chubbet, in contempt. "You miserable, half-starved Tombs hystery!"

"And what are you?" retorted Weisel.

"An overgrown vampire, that has got fat on the money you have robbed your clients of!"

Chubbet got purple with passion.

"To be insulted in my own office, by such a thing as this!" he exclaimed, raising his eyes upward, as if addressing some mysterious and potent spirit resident in the ceiling.

"A wretch, who, when his unfortunate client hasn't got anything else, will even take the very shirt from his back to satisfy his claims."

"And you?" exclaimed Weisel, in a passion. "what do you do? You don't leave your client any thing at all. You rob him with the cool effrontery of a faithful steward, when you are simply betraying every confidence reposed in you. Many an heir is now walking about New York penniless, simply because you had the settling of his property and 'gobbled' it all in the settlement. No wonder your clients say you ought to be called Grab-it-instead of Chubbet."

"Wretch!" cried Chubbet, enraged beyond endurance at this attack upon his probity, "mean, miserable wretch! I've half a mind to crush you on the spot!"

And Chubbet, rising, seized a large law-book and poised it in the air as if about to heave it at the head of the pettifogger.

Weisel was not at all alarmed by this hostile demonstration, but lay back in his chair and laughed.

"You'd make a capital tragedian—a much better tragedian than a lawyer. Now, when you get through with your gymnastic exercises, perhaps you'll be kind enough to settle down quietly and talk business."

"I will have no business transactions with you, sir!" exclaimed Chubbet, laying down his book and coming to the conclusion that his visitor was not to be bullied.

"Just as you please," said Weisel, coolly. "I shall have some business transactions with you before you're a week older—that is, if you continue to represent Mr. Allyne Courtmay, known now as Mr. Allyne Strathroy."

"Do you suppose, sir, for a single instant, that any court in the known world would listen to this ridiculous cock-and-bull story about the Strathroy family?" asked Chubbet.

"Yes, I do suppose so," said Weisel.

"You ought to know that I feel pretty sure of my case by engaging in it, for it is quite outside my usual line of practice."

"Case?" growled Chubbet; "you have no case."

"If you will take the trouble to cast your eye over this paper—it's only a copy, by the way—you will soon see whether I have a case or not."

And Weisel took a paper from an inside pocket and handed it to Chubbet. He opened it.

It was a marriage certificate, and the contracting parties were Clinton Strathroy

and Lizzie Duke. The date, New York city, March 30th, 1846.

Then Weisel handed him another paper.

It was a record of baptism.

"Allyne Strathroy, son of Clinton Strathroy and Lizzie, his wife. Charleston, South Carolina. April 23d, 1847."

"What do you think of my case now?" asked Weisel, with a quiet smile.

"Bah! these papers are fabrications; you can not prove them to be genuine," said Chubbet, slowly, but at the same time he could not help confessing to himself that the papers had an "ugly" look.

"Oh, are they?" said the pettifogger, quietly. "Well, there's one thing certain. It won't take long to discover whether they are genuine or not. I think they are genuine, because I have in person seen the minister who married the couple, and the two witnesses to the marriage; also, the doctor who attended Mrs. Strathroy—the first—through her illness, and the clergyman who baptized her child. Luckily for my client, Mr. Allyne Strathroy, the first, all the parties are alive. I suppose that even you will confess that if my client can prove the marriage of his mother and the date of his birth, and his own identity as Allyne Strathroy, nothing on earth can prevent him from coming into possession of his father's estate, under the bequest of the will, which distinctly says, 'to my eldest son, Allyne Strathroy.' Of course, if he proves the facts that I have stated to be facts, he is the elder son by a good twelve months."

"I will admit nothing, sir," cried Chubbet, hastily; "it is unprofessional, sir. Your conduct, sir, is unprofessional—in the highest degree unprofessional—in coming to me at all."

"Do you think so?"

"Yes, sir, I do."

"Mr. Chubbet, you are a man of the world. I use the term, 'man of the world,' to indicate a man who don't care a snap for anybody but himself, and who will not hesitate to put a good round sum of money into his pocket—even if it is done in a manner that, possibly, the honest men in the world would say was no better than robbery—as long as it is done quietly."

"I don't see the drift of your remarks, sir," said Chubbet, looking askance at the pettifogger.

"Allow me to explain," said Weisel.

"The Strathroy property is entirely out of your hands, is it not?"

"Entirely," answered Chubbet.

"Then, of course—friendship aside—for in business, you know, friendship does not exist—it doesn't make two cents' worth of difference to you, whether Mr. Allyne Strathroy holds this property, or Mr. John Smith, or John anybody else?"

"No, sir, it does not."

"Ah—well, I thought not," said Weisel, with an air of satisfaction. "Now we are coming to the reason why I have visited you this afternoon—why I have 'interviewed' you, as a newspaper-reporter would say."

Chubbet thought to himself that, if "interviewing" consisted in getting on the blind side of a man, leading him into a skillfully-prepared trap, and making him make a donkey of himself generally, he had been pretty thoroughly "interviewed" by the Tombs lawyer.

"Now then, Mr. Chubbet, I want you to examine into the justice of my client's claim to this Strathroy estate. Do it fully. Examine the papers—the witnesses. Put us through a rigid cross-examination. We can stand it. And if in the end you are convinced—as convinced you surely will be—that the Allyne Strathroy whom I represent has the undoubted legal right to this estate under the will of the father, Clinton Strathroy—"

"Well, supposing that I am convinced, what then?" asked Chubbet, whose keen scent detected "money" in this transaction.

"What would be your duty, as an honest man, toward your client, Mr. Allyne Strathroy No. 2?" demanded Weisel. "I will answer that question for you," he continued; "answer it as I myself would answer, should a similar question be put to me. If I discovered that my case was weak—that the opposing party had, really a legal and a just claim; that, in fact, my client hadn't a leg to stand on, I should feel it my imperative duty, as an honest lawyer, to say to my client, 'compromise it.'"

"Ah—um!" Chubbet understood the game now.

"But you will naturally ask," continued Weisel, "why—if I am so sure of my case—why should I consent to a compromise? I will explain. Of course my client has no money. I get the affair started with my funds. Once started, the rest is easy enough. After the thing is settled, supposing my client to have won, he will not be apt to want to pay me what my services are worth. Now, if you bring your client to consent to a compromise, I go to mine and say to him: 'Your case is weak; if we carry it on we shall be apt to get beaten. The other party offers to compromise; I have frightened them; take the money and drop the case. Here's ten thousand dollars for you—or whatever the sum is. He takes it, of course, and the affair is ended. I pay you a handsome sum for your valuable services in the matter, and put the rest of the compromise-money into my own pocket. You see, it is a strictly honorable transaction from beginning to end, and we have acted as hon-

est men toward our clients, and advised them solely for their own good."

Chubbet bowed in the affirmative.

This was a scheme after his own heart.

"How much am I to receive?" he asked.

"I thought that ten thousand dollars would be about the fair thing," replied Weisel.

"Yes, that will be satisfactory," said Chubbet, after thinking for a moment. "But I fear it will be difficult to persuade my Mr. Allyne into a compromise. He's a terribly obstinate fellow."

"Let him examine the proofs—the witnesses," replied Weisel. "He'll be speedily convinced that he really hasn't got the shadow of a claim to the Strathroy property. Of course, when that fact is patent to him, he will be very glad to have the chance to save some of his money by a compromise."

"Certainly. I'll see Mr. Strathroy and let him know of this. I now see that it is my duty to advise him to compromise it at once."

"That ends our interview," said Weisel, rising. "The witnesses and papers are ready for your client's inspection at any time. You know where my office is."

"Yes," and Chubbet rose. "By the way, you will overlook my hasty remarks a few minutes ago?"

"Certainly," replied Weisel. "I trust you will forgive my expressions derogatory to your character."

"Of course. By-the-by, how much is the compromise for? I forgot to ask."

"Half the estate—fifty thousand dollars."

"And ten thousand out of that for me?"

"Yes. Good-day, Mr. Chubbet."

The bargain was made.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 20.)

## Without a Name.

BY COL. LEON LAFITTE.

SWIFTLY dashing the waves from her iron sides, the noble steamer, "Anchor," was rapidly nearing New York, and standing upon her decks, with longing eyes cast upon the distant shore each moment rising more distinctly into outline, was a crowd of passengers conversing in lively tones at the prospect of soon again being upon terra firma.

Leaning against the stern-railing of the vessel was a young and lovely girl of seventeen, and as she gazed dreamily upon the land ahead, two boys at play upon the deck fell against the railing, it gave way, and she was thrown into the ocean.

A wild scream was heard from all around, and a young man who had been slowly pacing the forward deck rushed aft, and with one bound sprung into the sea, and after a few strong strokes reached the side of the drowning girl.

"Do not be frightened, Miss Curtis, but trust to me," said the young man, as he upheld the slight form in his strong arms.

"I am frightened, sir, but I trust you," was the brave rejoinder, as she yielded herself to his support.

The steamer had been stopped, a boat lowered, and it was rapidly approaching, while the scene was watched from the crowded decks of the "Anchor," and numerous calls were heard from the passengers urging the brave youth to have courage.

His courage and strength saved the fair girl and himself, for in a few moments they were taken into the boat, while a loud cheer from the steamer's crew and passengers proved the happiness of all at the fortunate termination of what at first seemed a fatal accident.

While the young girl was carried to her state-room by her mother and father, the brave young man, shunning all praise which was bestowed upon him, sought his bunk forward, for he was a steerage-passenger, and changing his clothes, again ascended to the deck.

"The captain wants you in the cabin, sir," said a sailor, approaching him.

With a sigh the youth went aft, and descended to the cabin where he saw the young girl, whom he had rescued, her father and mother, and the captain of the steamer.

Mr. Curtis, with feeling, yet in a pompous manner, thanked the young man, seconded by his wife, for the service rendered them, all, and concluded by saying:

"I see you are poor, and I wish you to take this check for one thousand dollars."

"I did not do my duty, sir: I need no thanks. I am poor, but I need not your money, sir. Good-evening," and with a haughty bow he turned from the cabin.

Mr. Curtis was speechless, and gazed at his wife: Mrs. Curtis was silent but returned her husband's look; the captain gave a loud whistle and seemed not to know what to say. But Nellie Curtis sprung forward, exclaiming:

"Forgive father, please do, sir, he did not intend to insult you; oh, please let me in some way prove my gratitude."

The haughty look turned to a sad smile, the mouth parted as if about to speak, but a moment after the young man bowed and left the cabin.

"What do you know of him, captain?" asked Mr. Curtis, as soon as he recovered from his astonishment.

"Nothing, sir; he came aboard at Liverpool and took a steerage passage. He has

seen better days, and I suppose is some Englishman who has run through his money and is emigrating to America," answered the captain.

"You are wrong, sir; his face does not show dissipation," said Nellie, with fire in her dark eyes, "and, father, you should try to serve him in New York otherwise than trying to pay him for my life."

The "Anchor" reached her wharf, and the wealthy Mr. Curtis, his wife and daughter, were once more at home after their six months' tour in Europe.

Feeling that he had done wrong, Mr. Curtis sought the young Englishman, and giving him his card, asked him to call and see them.

Glancing at Nellie and catching a warm invitation in her eye, the young man remarked:

"My name is Bonham, Arthur Bonham, and I thank you, sir, for the honor done me," then raising his hat he turned from the carriage.

As months passed, Arthur became a frequent visitor at the Curtis mansion, and having secured a situation as secretary in a large mercantile house, he was doing very well in a worldly sense. Mr. Curtis had never liked young Bonham from the time he refused his aid, and only tolerated his visits to Nellie because he was ashamed to forbid them.

The two young people had learned to love each other devotedly, and with Nellie's consent, Arthur asked her father for the hand of his daughter.

"My daughter marry you, sir! a beggar. No, sir. I'll pay you well for the service you rendered us, but not by giving you my daughter. Who are you? You have no name, no wealth, or any thing to entitle you to her love."

"It is true, sir, I am unknown to you, and have not made for myself a name; but I hope yet to claim your daughter with your consent."

"Never, sir! never!—leave my house, sir."

With the haughty look that so well became him, Arthur turned from the house without a word of farewell to Nellie.

Two years after, while seated at breakfast in his handsome house, with his wife and daughter on either side of him, Mr. Curtis was reading a letter from his son Edgar, who had been for some years a student in Heidelberg.

"Edgar writes he will be at home in two months after we receive this letter, and intends bringing with him his intimate friend, Lord Wycliffe," said Mr. Curtis, brightening up at the prospect of so soon seeing his son; "so we must have all in readiness, wife, to greet them. And, Nellie, you must leave off that sad look of yours, put on ever since I ordered Bonham out of my house, and try and catch this English lord. Why, you'll be the envy of Fifth avenue. Only think, a Lord staying with us," and with a pleased chuckle the old gentleman went down-town to look after his monied speculations.

Two weeks after all was in readiness to receive the son and heir to the Curtis mansion, and his distinguished friend, Lord Wycliffe.

Mr. Curtis drove down to the steamer, and hardly embracing his long absent son, inquired anxiously:

"Where is the lord, Edgar?"

"Here, father, Lord Wycliffe."

"Who? what! That!—why that is Arthur Bonham."

"Yes, Mr. Curtis, I am Lord Arthur Bonham Wycliffe; the past I will explain. Now, let us be friends," and for the sake of Nellie the young lord extended his hand.

Heartily ashamed of his conduct in the past, hoping for some romance in the life of Arthur, and fearing some trick was being played upon him, the old man took the proffered hand, and entering the carriage, they were driven home.

Picture the surprise and joy of Nellie, and the astonishment of Mrs. Curtis, to see the man without a name, who had been banished from the house, return as Lord Wycliffe. Then around the family circle Arthur told his story.

That he was a second son, and without a fortune had left England for America, while his elder brother inherited the title and estates.

He spoke of the death of that brother, some time after Mr. Curtis had refused him his daughter's hand, and that then he was summoned to England as Lord Wycliffe. Traveling in Germany he had met Edgar Curtis, and becoming firm friends, he had told Edgar of his love for his sister, and his refusal by his father. Then a plan was concocted between them, and the result was that the exile was received again.

A happy household was the Curtis mansion that night, and when the day afterward Lord Wycliffe led Nellie to the altar, Mr. and Mrs. Curtis thought they could not do too much for their children to efface the unpleasant remembrance of the past.

**Dark Faces.** If the splendid story, "Romance of the Ruby Ring"—now running through our columns—illustrates some of the nobler traits of human nature, it paints, with terribly real truth, the dark side of that nature. The characters of Lady Mand, Willis Wildfern, and the Giant Negro, are really types of people who infest all the great cities, literally "seeking whom they may devour." Read the captivating serial, and be all the wiser for its lessons!







my going to California besides the desire to better myself, and as I haven't really any reason for concealing the truth from you, why I will tell you all about it. I am a New Yorker, born and bred. When I was about ten years old my father died, and a year or so after, my mother, leaving me entirely alone in the world. I was employed in a large jobbing house on Broadway. My salary, though small, sufficed for my wants. I remained in the employ of the establishment I speak of till I was about twenty, then I fled from New York a criminal from justice, although in all my life I had never wronged a human being."

"That is strange," said his companion, in wonder.

"Yes, but it is true. I will tell you how it happened. My employer had a daughter, a beautiful girl of seventeen. She came very often to the store, and soon she and I became acquainted. It's the old, old story; we fell in love with each other. I, the poor penniless clerk, with nothing in the world but my salary, and that only just enough to support me, was foolish enough to love the daughter of my employer who was rated as being worth half a million. In some way—how I never discovered—Maurice Pillet—that was the name of my employer—was informed that I loved his daughter Isabel. He asked me if what he had heard was the truth; I did not deny it. Of course he was terribly angry, and insisted that I must give up all thoughts of his daughter as I was no match for her. Naturally I refused. We parted in anger, but he did not discharge me from his service as I had expected. He had formed a plan to crush not only my love for his daughter but her love for me. One day, as I left the store to go to dinner, I was arrested before I had gone a dozen steps on a charge of theft, and in my coat-pocket was found the money alleged to have been stolen. It was all plain to me in an instant. In the store I had worn a loose sack, and my coat had been hung on the nail as usual. Of course some enemy had placed the money in the pocket of the coat for the purpose of ruining me. A poor, friendless clerk—what could I say? Then Pillet took me aside and said he would not press the charge if I would leave the country. 'What could I do?'

"Nothing but accept his offer."

"Right," I did so. In California I wrote to Isabel, and for reply received a newspaper which contained the news that she had married another. That crushed all the light out of my life.

"And no wonder," said the other; "who did she marry?"

"I don't remember the name; it was some common one. I don't blame her. I had fled with a brand of shame upon my name. It was but natural that she should forget me. I have an idea, too, that my letter never reached her, but that the tidings came from her father."

"Very likely; but, Hal, I want some of these roses." Then Gilbert turned to the flower-girl, Hilda.

"How much, sir?" he asked, picking up one of the little bouquets.

"Ten cents, sir," she replied.

A strange expression came over the face of Davenport as the tones of the girl fell upon his ear.

"I'll take this bunch," said Gilbert, giving the girl a ten-cent stamp.

"And the price of this?" asked Davenport, pointing out a bunch.

"Ten cents too, sir."

The man took the flowers and paid the girl.

"How old are you, my girl?" he asked, in his pleasant, manly voice.

"Thirteen, sir."

"What is your name?"

"Hilda Williams."

"Are your parents living?"

"Only my mother, sir."

"Is not this a hard life for a child like you?"

"My mother is very poor, sir, and she has not been well for some time."

"What is the matter with her?"

"She worked too hard, sir," answered the girl, sadly.

"And haven't you any friends to help you?" asked the man, scanning her features eagerly.

"No, sir," said she, with a sad smile.

"Williams," muttered the returned Californian, thoughtfully; "was your father's name George Williams?"

"Yes, sir," said the girl, opening her eyes wide in surprise.

"I thought the name was familiar to me, Gilbert," he said, turning to his friend; "here is some one that I know. Where do you live?" addressing the question to the girl.

"In a very poor place, sir," replied the girl, hesitatingly; "in Crosby street."

"I must see your mother," said Davenport, decidedly. "Will you take me to your home. I may be able to assist you."

"Yes, sir," said the girl, gleefully.

"Will you come with me, Gil?"

"Certainly," replied his friend.

And so, conducted by the girl, the two proceeded to a miserable tenement-house in Crosby street. There, in a small room, but scantily furnished, they found the mother of the rose-girl, sitting at a table.

The mother and daughter were strikingly alike in features.

The quick eye of the Californian saw plainly that toil and want had caused the illness of the pale, delicate-looking woman before him.

She was apparently about thirty, and still pretty, though care and hardship had left their indelible marks upon her wan face.

Briefly the Californian said that he had known her family and trusted that she would be willing to accept some assistance at his hands.

As he spoke a strange light shone in the eyes of the woman, and earnestly she gazed into the bearded face of the man.

"You know my husband?" she asked.

"Yes," Davenport answered, with some hesitation.

"Do you know that he died some thirteen years ago?"

"No; is it possible?"

"Yes, I was a widow six months after I became a wife, and since that time my life has been one long struggle for existence," said the voice of the woman.

"Did not your father help you?"

"My father died before my husband, a broken, ruined man. Reverses came suddenly upon him. He died penniless. I have struggled on till lately when my strength gave way, and but for Hilda we both should have starved."

"You shall never know what it is to want in the future," cried Davenport, quickly.

"Can I expect aid from you, Harry, you, who, in obedience to my father's will, I have wronged so?" she asked, mournfully.

"You know me, Isabel?" he cried.

"Yes," she answered.

"Isabel," and he knelt by the side of the little sofa on which lay the woman—his early love; "give me the right to care for you in the future, and be a father to your child."

After fifteen years, true love met its reward.

In the face of the girl the Californian had recognized the features of the mother. And now, in the daughter of Harry Davenport, few would recognize Hilda, the Rose-Girl.

## Claudia Merle's Vow.

BY MARY REED CROWELL.

"Archer!"

The name came from the lady's lips in sweetly-musical tones, and the black eyes grew softer and tenderer as she spoke. Perhaps the gentleman heard, perhaps not; for he never lifted his eyes from the paper he was reading; and the black eyes began to flash and sparkle.

"Archer, I spoke to you. Did you hear me?"

Mrs. Merle came a step nearer her husband. He lifted his eyebrows, as if suddenly aware of her presence, while the half-scornful smile on his mustached lip belied his gesture.

"Claudia! I was so deeply engrossed in the latest war dispatches, that it shall be my excuse. What can I do for you, my dear?"

He laid his paper on the floor, and leaned carelessly back in the easy-chair, his bold, handsome face turned smilingly toward her, his brilliant, merciless eyes fixed on her sweet face.

"I wanted to speak about Zella, Archer. Indeed, I must speak; I must object to this intimacy longer. Oh, Archer, my husband, why will you crush my heart down to the dust? Is it not enough that I have given her a place in our home, at our table, that she must rob me of my one treasure?"

Her beautiful hands were clasped imploringly together, and her eyes were filled with tears.

Archer Merle listened, with a smile on his face.

"You overrate matters, Claudia; besides, do you think it courteous to slander a guest in this secret manner? I imagine Miss Zella Romaine, lovely as she is, would not feel

complimented to hear her hostess speak thus of her."

Claudia's cheeks paled as her husband spoke, in his careless, indifferent way, and then she drew nearer to him, as if compelled by a tenderness she could not, yet desired to, control.

Passingly touching were her words when she spoke.

"Archer, let me ask you plainly this question. Have you not ceased to love me, my dear?"

A half-amused laugh escaped him.

"Why, Claudia, whatever put such an idea in that pretty little head?"

"Because, my husband, I fear so, and my heart is breaking, as, day after day, I see the chains that formerly united us in such sacred bondage, gradually unlink; while Zella Romaine, with her peerless beauty, is taking you away from me. Oh, Archer, Archer!"

Then she bowed her head on his knees, and he heard her groans of anguish.

He was a strange man, was Archer Merle, cold, cynical, talented, elegant, sarcastic; and yet, withal, he had taught Claudia Morse to worship him as he chose to be worshipped. He had always liked her exceedingly well, and had been proud of her beauty and grace, while he loved to hear people talk about "Merle's magnificent wife." But, latterly, when Zella Romaine, who had turned scores of wiser heads than his, had evinced a decided preference for his society, married though he was, he had not been displeased; he had introduced her in his family; his trusting, worshipping wife had received her as a dear friend, and then—ah, then the wife's heart broke.

Her head lay on his knee, and he, her husband, complacently stroked his stylish mustache.

"Don't cry, Claudia; you'll make your eyes swollen, and how'll that look for the soiree to-night?"

Perhaps his heartless words had something to do with it; at any rate she arose suddenly, calm and dispassionate.

"If you care more for my looks than my feelings, Archer, I will take my heartache elsewhere."

But Miss Romaine will be looking so blooming, and you must not be behind her."

"Why not?" she exclaimed, passionately.

"When I am her inferior in every respect, in your opinion."

Her eyes began to grow ominously dark, and Merle arose from his seat to saunter idly across the room.

"Archer! I demand an answer! I demand of you to tell me what this disgraceful flir-

tation means between you and this guest of ours! I approached you in love, you gave me no satisfaction. Now, by virtue of my relation to you, Archer Merle, I demand a satisfactory answer!"

A frown—you could hardly tell whether it was maliciousness or tormenting wickedness—swept over his face before he spoke.

"But, suppose I refuse to accede to your very mild request?"

"Then I'll bring her face to face with you, and either take her by her shoulder and put her out of this house, or make her confess what I've long suspected."

Her eyes were flashing now, darkly; and a scowl passed over his face.

"Ah! that lady at your peril!"

"Insult that lady at your peril!"

"You have intentionally betrayed your secret. You refuse to answer your wife a question she has a heaven-given right to ask, and you openly offer protection to a usurper and an unprincipled woman!"

Then he laughed, as if to wound her by his indifference, and took a careless, free and easy position before her, his knee resting on the crimson velvet chair seat, and his head leaning nonchalantly on his hand—a handsome, shapely hand, white as a woman's.

Before him she stood, in the might of her noble, outraged womanhood, wifehood, and with her fair, white hand pointed to the solemn skies she warned him; and her low, earnest tones, terrible in the thunder of concentrated wrath, made his heart shiver, even while his lips framed a scornful smile.

"Archer Merle, just as sure as you ever again give me cause to doubt your loyalty to me, just as sure as I ever know of Zella Romaine endeavoring to win you from your rightful allegiance to me, will I strike you and her a blow that will blast your happiness for all time, even as you have ruthlessly destroyed mine. Archer Merle, remember!"

"What do I care for the ridiculous conventionalities of society? The society that would be glad to shut their eyes to the past, provided we have money enough to entertain them? Zella! Zella! my charmer! my enchantress! my siren! if you can not brave a few gossiping tongues, your love must be faint indeed!"

Archer Merle bent his proud head till the blonde hair that swept off his forehead mingled with the chestnut-brown curls of Zella Romaine.

She raised her eyes—oh, what passionate, ardent eyes those were, deep and liquid, like the sea under a sunset sky.



CLAUDIA MERLE'S VOW.

set of faces I have unfortunately misplaced. Come in."

"Oh, no, thank you! I was just about retiring when I thought perhaps you'd like this spray of clematis; you are so partial to it. Isn't it lovely?"

Miss Romaine was only too delighted at the unsuspicious courtesy of her hostess, and she gladly accepted, scenting it strongly several successive times.

"Thank you—thank you; it is strangely fragrant; I never remember to have smelled so rare a flower."

And then, her eyes like stars, Claudia bade her good-night and re-entered her room, locking the door and turning down the gas.

"She'll think me asleep," she said, to herself, as she entered Archer's dressing-room.

There was no disorder there; and her husband sat smoking coolly by the gas-drop. Her quick eyes discovered the hand-valise well stuffed with the sofa, and she had changed his dress-suit for a Cheviot traveling suit.

"Archer, I have come to bid you good-night, and to bring you your favorite moss-rose; the last there will be on the bush this year I fear."

How her hand trembled as she essayed to hand it to him; and her fingers let it drop to the floor.

"Thank you, Mrs. Merle; and now that you have come I will tell you I leave for the city before breakfast, for a couple of days."

His eyes never moved off her face; and, while he spoke, he raised the flower to his face.

"It is beautiful, but I imagine it smells strangely—perhaps it has lain near another less odorous blossom."

She waited a moment, then went away, stopping at the door, with a wistful, half-terrified look; then she went away, and flung herself on her bed, shivering and moaning.

The morning sunlight came in broad golden banners across the bed where Claudia Merle had fallen into an exhausted, dreamless sleep, awaking her with a sudden start. She sprang to her feet, listening as one who listens for a sound they dread to hear; then she walked mechanically to her bureau, and began arranging the little trifles thereon.

Directly she sprang back as if a serpent had stung her, and a suppressed scream burst from her lips.

"Poised! thwarted! it was harmless

whose perfume stole so subtly sweet to her senses; when she had locked herself in this elegant chamber to prepare for her flight, when the midnight bells rung out, Claudia Merle paced to and fro on the grassy lawn, silent as an ebon shadow, watching the light in Zella Romaine's room, and then gazing at the illumination in her husband's dressing-chamber.

Oh, it was fearful—fearful! And was she powerless to stay the blow that was to smite her? She remembered her vow; and her eyes flashed with a fiercer glow, and her perfect lips parted over the white teeth in a boding smile.

She glanced at her watch; the light from the windows told her it was twenty minutes after ten. At half-past eleven or thereabouts they would leave the house, and then?

Never mind what then. There remained ample time to do her work before they left it.

So she deliberately ascended the stairs to her own superb apartments, and turned on the gas; then she removed her evening dress, and put in place thereof her night-wrapper, a dainty-flowing garment, with costly lace, and gold and coral buttons, handsomer far than many a bridal robe.

Then she sat down a moment; and when she arose, her steps were unsteady and trembling.

To a drawer in her toilet-case she went, and took therefrom a tiny phial, and poured one single drop on a pink moss-rose-bud that she had taken from her bouquet; then, on a spray of snow-white clematis she poured another drop, the while her eyes flashed and sparkling, her figure shivering and trembling.

Then she took the bottle and dashed it into fragments on the marble top of her bureau, and carefully swept the crushed crystals into her hand, and then poured them down the drain-pipe of the bath-room, while a rush of water that she turned on dashed them forever away.

She had grown calm now, and the rich color had returned to her cheeks; she was looking beautiful as a picture in her pure white dress, and perhaps she knew it.

So she took up the two fragrant flowers, and went first across the corridor, and tapped at Miss Romaine's door.

Flushed and startled the girl opened it; then, when Mrs. Merle nodded and smiled assuringly, she recovered her self-possession.

"Why, Claudia, dear, I supposed you were asleep by this time. Excuse the disorder of my room, but I'm trying to find a

cologne I poured on the flowers—and here stands the drug—the poison I had procured; that once inhaled, is sure, endless sleep!"

For a moment she passed her hand dreamily over her forehead, then she darted to Zella Romaine's room. It was unlocked and empty!

Down to her husband's—alas! husband no longer!—silent and deserted; only a note, cold, curt, telling her they had gone.

Back to her room, moaning and praying, wringing her hands and calling on God to have mercy for the crime with which she had eternally stained her soul, and which a Providence had prevented! Oh, the bitter, bitter anguish of that hour; nor let me lift the veil that separated her from her penitent confession.

At high noon came news, flashed along the telegraphic wires, and followed, two hours later, by the slow cortege of awestricken men who bore their dead bodies, bruised and crushed—Archer Merle and Zella Romaine! The train had collided with another, and among a score of souls, rushed, without a second's warning, into an awful eternity—and let us hope none with so foul a load of sin—were the two erring ones.

And when, in after days, Claudia Merle, in her somber widow's garments—and to none did she tell their secret or her own—moved sadly and quietly about in her elegant, lonely house, she learned to believe a pitiful father had forgiven her for his son's sake; she could thank Him that He had worked his own vengeance, in His own way, at His own good time.

## The Wife's Revenge;

OR,

The Tragedy at Walnut Grove.

BY JOSEPH E. BADGER, JR.

Yes, sir, there is a story connected with the old hall, and no man knows it better than I do; for, man and boy, I've lived there well nigh sixty years. I was born there, sir, and in your little grove of trees lies my father, mother and wife. Please God I may rest there too, when my time comes. But, this is not the story.

In the Mexican war the son of the old squire, Master Sandford Rollins, was a general. After the troubles were over and peace came, he brought home with him a young bride. You have seen the portrait that hangs in the library, covered with black crape; that is her picture—Lady Anita. But it no more resembled her than the moon does the sun. Oh, sir, you should have seen her as I have, come tripping out into the bright sunlight, her long, beautiful curls waving and dancing around her face and white neck. With her great black eyes sparkling, and her sweet voice sounding just like a bird's. She was a tiny little thing, more like what I've read of fairies than any thing else I could think of. You have watched a humming-bird as it flits from flower to flower, haven't you? Well, that was just like Lady Anita; she was ever changing, but ever lovely.

There was a great difference between their ages; he was over fifty, while she was scarcely twenty. I often watched them as they walked in the garden or through the park, and it was easy to see how deeply he loved her. It was more like idolatry than a husband's love.

For over a month nothing out of the way happened, when my master's only nephew came to the hall on a visit. Ah, me! it was a sad day for Walnut Grove when young master Charlie first entered it. He was a handsome boy, brave and generous, and no wonder that all learned to love him. He treated the servants as though they were his own kindred, and never a harsh word did I hear him speak to them; but always kind and gentle as a woman.

The mistress was greatly taken with his merry voice and pleasant ways, they were so much like her own. They were much together, riding and walking, and seemed to love each other like brother and sister. But the squire was not so well pleased, and often, after refusing to join them in their walks or rides, he would follow after as though he was watching them. I knew his mad temper and how deeply he loved Lady Anita, and feared, I scarcely knew what. I could read his thoughts; but they were not true; I do not believe that the young couple ever thought of the kind of love he suspected, and that they never imagined what had changed the squire so.

At last the trouble came that I had been watching for, and this was the way it occurred. Lady Anita and Master Charlie had been walking in the garden, where I was at work, and then they walked, arm in arm, to the center arbor, where they sat down, her hand in his. I heard a footstep, and looking up, I saw the squire creeping toward the arbor. His face was so red with anger that I stood and watched him.

Just as he reached the rear of the arbor, I saw young Master Charlie kneel at the feet of my mistress, and kiss her little hand. She placed her other hand upon his head and smoothed his hair, while a smile rested upon her sweet face. I never saw her look so lovely, before or since; but the look changed to terror as the squire leaped beside them, his long gray hair flying in the breeze, and his face purple with madness. He grasped Master Charlie by the throat, and snatching up a riding-whip that lay on the ground, he rained cruel, cutting blows upon the lad's face and shoulders. I ran to the arbor as soon as I could, and tried to part the two, but the squire, with an oath, struck me a blow with his fist that felled me senseless to the ground.

When I came to, I saw that the squire was just lifting mistress from the settee, where she lay in a dead faint. He pointed to Charlie, who was covered with blood, and told me to drive him from the grounds; to use the dog if he gave any trouble.

I could not be so cruel, and managed to carry him to the porter's lodge, where he would be safe, for a time at least, for Tim Brierly loved young Master Charlie, as indeed all the servants did. After dressing his wounds I put him to bed, weak and faint as a baby. It was now nearly night, so I went back to the hall and bathed my head. Martha—that was my wife, sir, that's dead and gone—saw that something was wrong, and after a deal of talk, got it all out of me; how the squire had acted. She was very angry, and vowed never to sleep beneath that roof again, but I coaxed her over.

Tea was now ready, and the butler went up to the squire's room and knocked. He heard the master's voice, loud and angry, but could hear no answer. Then the squire came to the door and ordered him away;





that they would not be down to tea that night. The butler told us this when he came down, and as you may well imagine, there was a deal of talk that night, below stairs, that was not very flattering to the squire, for we all fairly worshiped Lady Anita.

Early the next morning I went down to Tim's lodge, to see how Master Charlie was and learn what he intended doing. To my great surprise I found his bed empty, and waking the old porter, I asked him what had become of the lad. He stared at the bed, rubbed his eyes, and looked completely bewildered. He said that when he went to bed the young master was soundly sleeping; and that was all I could get out of him. I was badly scared, and ran as fast as I could back to the hall. I met my wife at the door, her face as white as a sheet, and she was trembling like a leaf. I asked her if Master Charlie was there, and she said:

"No, no; I don't know; come in, there's been awful doings here, last night! Ah, dear! oh, dear me!"

"Lady Anita—what is the matter, Martha?" I managed to stammer.

"No, no, she is well—the master! Oh, it's awful—awful!" she groaned; but then I managed to extract the real truth.

She told me that the mistress had come down to breakfast, and after waiting a while for the squire, had told Thompson to go and call him. In a little while he came running down-stairs, white as a ghost and trembling so that he could scarcely speak, and told the mistress that the squire was lying on the lounge in the smoking-room, dead! That Lady Anita gave one shriek and flew up-stairs, where she now was.

I rushed up-stairs and entered the master's smoking-room. I nearly fell to the floor at the terrible sight I saw. The master was lying upon the lounge, his long gray hair all bloody, his eyes staring wide open, and a fierce scowl upon his face. His throat was cut from ear to ear, and a long carving-knife was still sticking in his breast. Lady Anita was kneeling beside him, and as I looked at her I came near crying out, the fearful night had so changed her. The smile was gone, and her pale face looked like stone, it seemed so cold and hard. Her eyes had sunk, but seemed brighter than ever, from the leaden circles around them. I shuddered as I looked at her, and thought how much she must have suffered. She glanced at me, and I then tried to get her to go and lie down, but she waived me away, and said:

"No, William, I must stay here until the magistrate comes and something is done to discover my husband's murderer. Oh, my poor, dear Sanford! my husband, dead—dead!" and she bowed her head upon her hands.

I left the room and sent the housekeeper to her, as my wife was too badly frightened to be of much service. I watched anxiously for the magistrate and coroner, thinking all the time of Master Charlie and where he could have gone to.

When the coroner held the inquest, I was one of the first witnesses called, only Lady Anita being asked some questions first. I had not much to say, but after I told what I knew, Mr. Walton, the magistrate, said:

"Now, Mr. Howell, tell the gentlemen all you saw in the arbor last evening."

I was going to refuse, when my lady nodded for me to tell them. So I related all; how I saw the struggle, and how I carried Master Charlie to the porter's lodge. I saw the coroner nod to a little man in gray, who immediately left the room.

They told me I might sit down; I did so, for I was almost fainting, and my lady handed me a glass of water, whispering:

"Do not be afraid; you shall not be hurt."

The little man now returned and whispered a few words in Mr. Walton's ear, who called Tim Brierly's name. But he could only repeat what I had already said—that the lad had left in the night—and then we were turned out of the room. I went to my chamber, where Martha was lying down, and told her all that had passed, adding the words my lady had whispered. This comforted her a little, and presently she fell fast asleep.

As I went down-stairs I met Thompson, the butler, who told me the coroner's verdict. It was willful murder, against Charles Rollins.

I never was so astounded in all my life, for I had never once thought of him in connection with the murder. Then, like a flash, it all came to me; the struggle—the murder—the strange disappearance; all shot across my mind, and for a moment I felt he was the murderer. But then I remembered how kind he had ever been; how gentle, and how deeply he had seemed to love his uncle, the squire; and I cried out that it was a base, wicked lie! Then I saw Lady Anita standing by the window, with a glad smile upon her pale face, and coming forward, she took my hand, and whispered:

"Thank you, William; he is innocent. He could not do so cruel an act!" and then she passed from the room. I am not ashamed to confess it; when she was out of sight, I sat down and had a hearty cry that partly relieved my feelings. I took to my bed that night, and I did not leave it until after the funeral.

Then I heard that Master Charlie had been arrested at I—, and was now lying in jail awaiting his trial. Martha told me

that her mistress had never left her room since the day of the inquest, except to attend the burial of her husband. That she was more like a ghost than a live person, but had asked kindly after me, every day.

In a short time Master Charlie's trial came off, and I was forced to bear witness against him. It was hard to do, I loved him so; but I loved my mistress better, and she bade me do so. He did not make any defense, but declared his innocence, and I, for one, believed him. He said that he must have left the lodge in a fit of insanity; for that the next he could remember, after going to sleep at Brierly's, was awaking at a tavern in I—, where he was arrested. That before his arrest he had heard nothing of his uncle's murder.

He said this with such a truthful air that I felt sure all must believe him, and told Martha when I returned, that he was sure to be acquitted.

Lady Anita was too ill to attend the trial in person, so they had her deposition—I think they called it—taken, and it was produced as evidence instead. At last the trial was ended, and Charles Rollins was condemned to be hung by the neck, three weeks from that day!

I need not tell you that Martha and I were sorry, for you know how dearly we loved him, or how we tried to get a petition for his pardon, but all the gentry were prejudiced against him, and our attempt failed.

Lady Anita had now recovered somewhat, and as her physician recommended plenty of outdoor exercise, she would mount her favorite pony, Ypress, she named it, from her father's hacienda; a jet-black mustang that the squire had brought all the way from Mexico for her, and dash it like an arrow over the country. When she came home her face would be flushed and her eyes bright, as though the wild ride had done her good. But she never was the same bright, joyous, bird-like being that she had been, and while in the house she would sit pale and silent in her darkened room, as though brooding over her sorrows.

I would often ride over to the county jail to see Master Charlie, and once when I asked Lady Anita's permission to go, she said for me to tell him that she forgave him his great crime, and hoped that heaven would do the same. Then she bowed her head and murmured:

"Ah, how sinful! how sinful!"

I gave Master Charlie the message, word for word, and he cried out:

"Forgive me! she knows I am not guilty. If she would only speak the truth I would not be here now!" then, seeing how hurt I was, he turned to another subject.

On the third day before the execution was to be, Lady Anita mounted her pony as usual, and rode off alone. I wanted to accompany her, but she said no, I was too old and stiff to ride as she did; that she would let me go the next time. She always treated me like an overgrown baby, ever since the inquest, and I loved her more than ever for it. I do not know what was the matter with me that day, for I begged and begged for her to let me go, and said that I knew something awful would happen to her that I might prevent, if I went along.

"And what could my poor old William do? No, my man, I must go alone; but if Ypress comes home without me, then you may come. Will that do?" and giving the mustang its head, it flew down the avenue.

I could not work that day, and sat under the old walnut tree, thinking of my lady and poor Master Charlie. Somehow the words—"If she would only speak the truth, I would not be here now!" rung in my ears, and I could not get them out of my mind. I kept looking down the avenue, and hoping every minute that I would see the mustang appear with my mistress safely seated upon its back. It was late in the afternoon, and I must have fallen into a doze, for I heard the clatter of a horse's feet, and looking up I saw Ypress half way up the avenue; but where was my lady? The horse was covered with foam and the saddle was beneath his belly, striking its heels at every jump. I knew that my lady had been thrown, and perhaps killed. I caught the mustang, and calling to the servants to follow after me to search for their mistress, I cut the girth to free the saddle, and then jumped on the pony's back, giving him his head.

As I rode past the porter's gate I saw the servants leading out the horses, and then bounded along the road. I knew the mustang's smartness, and let him go his own way, as I knew that unless too badly frightened, he would follow his own trail. Mile after mile I rode, until I thought best to go in another direction, but then I saw the fresh tracks of a horse, and let the pony follow them. He stopped short by the side of a deep ditch, and looking down, I saw something white. I leaped down the gully, and there, all bruised and bleeding, was the form of my lady.

Carefully I raised her, and she opened her eyes and murmured: "Good William!" Then she fainted again. I got her home at last, goodness only knows how, for I don't. Her first words were:

"Send for Mr. Walton, the magistrate—quick!"

I sent both for him and her physician; meanwhile Martha did her best for her mistress. But she would not let us touch her wounds or search for her injuries. She

seemed to be sinking very fast, and only asked for wine, saying she must bear up until the magistrate had come.

He came at last, and I was about to leave the room when she bade me stay, saying that she wanted me for a witness. And then it all came out. How her husband had insulted her by suspecting her honor, and called her terrible names; even struck her.

"Yes!" she whispered—almost hissed; "he struck me—me, the daughter of a princess! But I vowed bitter vengeance on him; I vowed by all the saints to wipe out the insult in blood! And I kept my oath—you all know how well! Yes; it was I that killed General Rollins. Charles Rollins is innocent, but my hatred extended even to him, because he was of the same blood. Yes, I would have let him die a felon's death, had not this accident happened. He was only rehearsing an act in a tableau that we were to take part in when he found us."

She faltered for a moment; then whispered:

"The paper—my confession; is it all down? Then let me sign it—quick!" and as she wrote the last letter, her head dropped and she fell back, dead!

Yes, she died, with that dreadful sin still unrepented of, but I hope she was forgiven, for I loved her—almost idolized her, in spite of her crime.

Charlie was liberated, and I was the one that first told him of the fact. He immediately left the county, and I hear, is soon to bring a young bride to the hall—which is his, now, he being the last living relative of the squire. I trust that their fate will be more happy than the last couple that dwelled here, and I hope that I may live to see them; but then I am old and growing weak, and can't expect to live much longer.

You may wonder at my telling you the sin of her I loved so well, seeing you are a stranger, but I know that you would hear of it at the tavern yonder, to-night, and folks do not always tell the plain truth. But this, sir, is the true story of the old Hall, or as some more learned persons call it, "THE TRAGEDY OF WALNUT GROVE."

## The Banker's Ward:

OR,  
The Shadowy Terror of Arrancourt.

BY GEO. S. KAIME.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE TIGRESS SHOWS HER TEETH.

DEEPER and deeper settled the gloom around old Arrancourt. Norman Vinton, harassed by repeated visits from the dreaded phantom, which happened always unexpectedly, was but the shadow of his former self. He lived entirely secluded from every one but Dora. She alone kept him from absolute insanity.

Moses Martin, too, had grown gloomy and silent under his dire sufferings. He had nearly given up all hope of ever seeing Ella again, yet was continually searching for her. How much more terrible would have been his misery, had he known the full extent of Dora's wickedness.

Neither was Henry Vinton like himself. He wandered about the vast estate of Arrancourt, looking in every possible and impossible place, for some trace of his lost Ella. He never dreamed that she could go further than the boundaries of Arrancourt, without having been seen, and he had inquired for miles around. There was but one solution: the dark waters of the lake had closed over her. And yet—

Ah, that one spark of hope! It kept him alive, and sent him further on his search. He knew that Moses Martin had a brother in New York. Perhaps she had eluded them, and gone there. It was worth a trial; but he could not go without Dora's consent. How he loathed himself.

"Dora, I am going away in quest of Ella," said he, the same day that he formed the resolution. "I must know her fate, and then I will answer you. Keep your secret, I know not what it is, but the dread of it has been my curse ever since I came to Arrancourt."

Why did the ambitious woman allow him to leave her sight? It could not be for pity. It was that she believed the excitement would sooner make him forget her sister.

"Baby!" she muttered, but he did not hear it. "Silly fool! I shall hate him yet for his weakness—his goodness."

"You do not answer me, Dora!"

"Because I hate to let you go, Henry. It will be useless. Ella, poor child, is no more. I feel it—I know it, though I have seen or heard nothing, and—"

"And you ask me to marry you!" suddenly exclaimed Henry, while a look of the deepest detestation was stamped upon his face.

The question was a surprise to Dora, but she rallied instantly.

"I did ask you, Henry Vinton, but I do not now. I command you. Now go on your wild-goose chase, and when you find that I have spoken the truth, come back to me, or—"

He went. And close upon his track was a human sleuth-hound, Allan Wentworth, working for the love of the beautiful maniac, for what else can we call Dora Martin?

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE SCHEMER FOILED.

THE loss of Paul Rodney and Meta had a marked effect on Charles Matthews. He had loved Meta with true parental affection. Indeed, but few parents so fondly cherish their children as did he the orphan waif. He missed her in so many ways that it seemed he would never get over the loss.

He had looked upon Paul with a different feeling, yet none the less binding. He had admired him as something more than common man; and when his confidence in him was shaken, he lost faith in all mankind.

The men at the bank felt the change; and old Morton Talbot, who had been with Charles Matthews ever since he commenced business, was so hurt that he spoke to him about it.

"Charles," said he, "do you mistrust us all just because you have found one man delinquent? Must the whole world be gauged by Paul Rodney's dishonesty?"

"Who told you that Paul Rodney was dishonest?" sharply demanded the banker.

"Why, bless your soul! all Willhampton knows about it, even to the amount he was short. Ah, Charles, you made a great mistake."

"I do not profess perfection," said the banker, testily. "But I want to know who has been telling this story about Paul Rodney. Where do you think it started?"

"Why, don't you know, Charles? If you don't I must tell."

"You must tell me," was the stern reply.

"Mr. Charles," said old Morton, slowly, if it had been for your interest, I should have told you before; but as it is not, I shall not say another word. Now, all I ask is for you to trust us the same as ever."

The old man waited a moment for some reply, but as none came, he stepped carefully out of the office, feeling but little better.

This was the first intimation to Charles Matthews that the true reason for Paul's departure was known. He had purposely worked very cautiously in the matter. At first he believed Paul innocent, and wished to shield him from unjust suspicion; but when he saw indubitable proofs of his guilt, he worked for his own interest, and congratulated himself on having kept the whole affair a secret. The knowledge that all was known, combined with his other troubles, made him exceedingly wroth, and very unlike Charles Matthews.

He was in this vexed frame of mind when his nephew entered the office.

"George," said he, "do you know any thing about this Paul Rodney affair?"

"Well, not much, uncle," said George, not quite at ease.

"How much?"

"Why, you remember my words that led you to examine the books—"

"Who told you I examined the books?"

exclaimed the banker, in an angry tone that startled George.

"No one, sir. I merely guessed it."

"What business have you to guess any thing about my affairs?"

"I could not very well help it."

"Well, what else have you guessed?"

"Nothing, sir," replied George, who was also becoming angry.

"What do you know?"

"I know that Paul Rodney was sent away for taking money that did not belong to him."

"And you have told this?"

"I presume I have."

The banker's face grew cold and stern.

"Well, sir, it is the last of my affairs that you will have to gossip about. You can go, sir, and the sooner you can make it convenient to absent yourself from my house, the better pleased I shall be. I wish you a very good-day."

So the banker and his wife were left alone; and very lonely they were, too.

"Mother," said the banker, "we never can live so. We must have some of them back. Have I wronged Paul, mother?"

"Yes, Charles; he was innocent."

## CHAPTER XIX.

ONE THOUSAND DOLLARS REWARD.

PRINCE was only waiting for Ella's command. He had not been put upon the track, and though he knew this man was an intruder, and was crouched ready for a spring, he yet was waiting for the word. The moment Ella spoke, he was at the ruffian's throat, and the two went struggling to the floor.

Ella screamed and covered her face with the sheets. Meta awoke, and hearing the growling and snarling in the room, echoed Ella's cry of terror. Then hurried feet came along the passage, and Mr. Weller entered the room, bearing a light in one hand and a revolver in the other. His wife was just behind.

Weller gave a grim smile of satisfaction when he saw the man's face, and at once produced some handcuffs for the wretch; but Prince warned him off with a growl.

"Oh, he is your prisoner is he?" laughed Weller, not in the least disconcerted.

"He is worth an even thousand dollars."

Then he spoke to Meta to call the dog away. Prince, however, would not obey her voice, and Ella now called him.

The faithful hound instantly released his hold, but stood ready to take another grip if he thought it necessary.

The villain was not injured in the least, and the moment he found himself free, he sprang to his feet and made for Weller. But the detective was prepared for this.

"Not so fast, Flashy," said he, coolly planting a well directed blow straight between the eyes. Weller was a man of great muscular strength, and the stroke felled the man to the floor.

He followed up his advantage, and had the irons upon his wrists in a twinkling.

"There, sir, I have a hold on you now," said Weller, "that will not 'let up' very soon. Now move along, and I'll find you some lodgings."

The man obeyed, for the detective's revolver was uncomfortably near his head.

There was no more sleep for Meta and Ella; nor indeed for Mrs. Weller; so they all went down to the kitchen and began preparations for an early breakfast.

"Mrs. Weller, do all the men in the city carry pistols, and those funny bracelets that your husband put upon the man?" asked Ella, after the excitement was over.

"Oh, no," said Mrs. Weller; "Andrew is a detective."

"A real detective!" exclaimed Ella. "I've heard so much about them, but I never saw one before. Did you Meta?"

But Meta was very busy, and pretended not to hear. She had seen one at Willhampton, and it was this same Mr. Weller. She had not forgotten his face nor the questions he asked her.

Ella thought she had grown strangely reticent since the preceding evening, and rallied her upon her serious, woe-begone aspect.

Meta smiled and attempted to throw off the incubus which the sight of the detective had settled upon her, but she could not. Poor child! wherever she went her wretchedness followed her.

"Will he know me?" she thought.

"Must I be driven from here, too? Is there no rest for me this side of the grave?"

She evinced much agitation when Mr. Weller came in, but he gave no sign that he recognized her, and she felt more at ease.

"I congratulate you, ladies, on a good night's work," said he, with a smile. "Your reward is just one thousand dollars."

Ella looked her surprise, but Meta understood at once.

"Oh, Ella, how fortunate!" said she. "You are almost rich."

Yet Ella was puzzled, and the detective explained to her that the gentleman captured by Prince, was an old offender, for whom a reward was offered.

"A thousand dollars for that man!" exclaimed Ella, with a look that was almost ludicrous. "Well, Prince, I guess we had better continue the business."

"You couldn't take me for a partner?" asked Meta, playfully.

"You are an already," replied Ella.

"But what do you get, Mr. Weller?"

"My life," he answered, earnestly, glancing at his wife. "You occupied our sleeping room last night, and the rascal's knife would have found my heart, had you not been providentially put in my place, with your noble dog to watch over you."

"Oh, Andrew! I never thought of this!" exclaimed the young wife, as she threw her arms about her husband's neck, weeping tears of thankfulness.

"It is worth more to me than all the reward," said Ella, with true sympathy. "Ah, Prince, you know not what good you have done."

But Prince looked up so knowingly, that she doubted the truth of her words.

Flashy Dick was remanded to prison for a term of years that would probably last his natural life.

The reward offered for his capture was promptly paid to Mr. Weller, who in turn gave it to Ella. She insisted that he should take a share of it, but he would not.

"You know, Ella," said he, "that I have received the lion's share already, for what is gold to a life?"

Nevertheless Ella really wished that the good people should have their share of this money, and, unknown to Weller, she placed a sealed package in the young wife's hands to be opened after she went away. The balance of the money she divided equally with Meta. Meta took it, but she laid it by for Ella's use, should she need it.

Their next step was to procure some employment.

"We must go away from here," said Meta, who could not get over her fears.

"At least I must," said Ella.

"I shall go where you go," said Ella.

"Then let us go far away from here, into some quiet country place."

The girls had exchanged secrets all but that whispered revenge of James Martin—Meta could not tell that—and Ella felt justified in remaining away from her father until she could meet Henry Vinton without betraying her misery, so she readily consented to be governed by Meta's wishes.

They informed Mr. Weller of their determination, and he promptly offered his advice. He knew of a family who were in want of a teacher for their grandchild, and he had no doubt that they would accept the services of both.

He opened correspondence with the Moreleys, and received very satisfactory replies; but how far he used his influence, the girls never knew.

So they bid good-by to the kind Wellers, and set out for Palm Grove.



## CHAPTER XX.

"TO THE FRONT, MARCH!"

ALMOST hopeless, Henry Vinton set out for New York. He had procured the address of Doctor James Martin from his brother, but he had no better success than Ella. To be sure he found the house with that silver door-plate, but the doctor was in Europe. He never thought to inquire if Ella had been there. The very fact of the doctor's absence seemed to imply that she had not.

That night a letter for Dora Martin was dropped into the post-office. It read:

"Doctor James Martin is in Europe. Ella has not been here. Henry will remain in the city for a few days."

"ALLAN WESTWORTH."

Henry spent two or three days in wandering about the city, hoping that some chance would bring him tidings of the lost one; but he at length became aware of the futility of further search without help. Much as he detested it, he resolved to employ a detective. He returned to his hotel, and dispatched a message to Mulberry street, which was promptly answered by our friend Weller in person.

Henry was sitting at a table with his head leaning upon his hand in a very despondent attitude.

"What's that hangdog doing at your door?" was the first question of the detective.

"I'm sure I know nothing about it," said Henry, stepping to the door.

"Oh, you'll not find him," said Weller. "It doesn't matter much—he's of no special account. You sent for me, Mr. Vinton? Andrew Weller, from Mulberry street."

"Yes, sir. I need help."

"In what way?"

The detective leaned his chair back against the wall, threw one leg over the other, and tipped his hat down over his eyes in a way that was suggestive of a comfortable nap. Nevertheless, Henry went on, concealing nothing of importance.

Weller heard him through without comment. Then he arose and stepped toward the door.

"Where shall I find you when I want you, Mr. Vinton?"

"If I leave here, I will send you my address," said Henry. "But do you give me no hope?"

"I will see you again," replied Weller, as he bowed himself out of the room.

Hardly was the detective out of hearing, when there came a loud rap at Henry's door, followed by the entrance of a man in military garb.

"How—are—you—Hank Vinton?" exclaimed the new-comer, boisterously, shaking Henry's hand until the continued motion grew painful.

"Will Harding?" exclaimed Henry, in pleased surprise.

"Captain Harding, if you please. But, when did you arrive?"

"Three days ago, Will—excuse me, captain."

"That's right, my boy. I thought you had not been here long, you look so blue. But I've found a panacea for the blue-devils, no matter what is the cause. Join the army. What do you say?"

"Not yet, captain. I have other work to do."

"Fudge! You're in love, I'll bet."

Henry colored slightly.

"I've guessed it the first pop! Well, Hank, it is good business, provided always that you have a good partner; but it won't do for times like these. Let it rest, for awhile and come with us. We've got the jolliest set of fellows, and our colonel can't be beat. What do you say?"

"Let me think of it awhile, captain. I certainly can not say now."

"Just as good as gone!" cried the captain. "I'll have you on a commission by Saturday night. We want one more good captain. Now good-night, old boy. Go to bed and dream of the lady as much as you please, but when you wake,

"Gird on your armor and be marching along!"

Henry Vinton had but little idea of joining the army when he asked for time to decide, but as the days passed and he heard nothing whatever of Ella, he grew to think more seriously about it. It certainly offered strong inducements; a life of wild adventure and daring; of excitement, to drive away his sorrow; perhaps an honorable death, to escape the dishonor which he felt sure Dora could heap upon him.

Then there came a letter from Mr. Martin, saying that he had given up all hopes of meeting his lost child again in this world. And there were a few lines from Dora, reminding him of the terrible power she had. He replied to Mr. Martin, but not a word to Dora. Her threat decided him—drove him further away.

Though he did not write to Dora, she heard of him. Allan Wentworth wrote, and received the answer:

"Henry Vinton must never return alive to Arran-court!"

Allan Wentworth pocketed the crisp bank-note, muttering:

"The devil is in the woman; but I must do it."

So Henry Vinton became Captain Henry Vinton, and the commanding officer of the regiment was Colonel Paul Rodney.

Another week passed, and the regiment was ordered to the front.

Just as they were embarking, detective Weller stepped up to Captain Vinton, put

a little card into his hand, and went away again.

The captain grew pale and staggered against the car, as he read Ella's address on that little bit of pasteboard, but it was too late. He heard Colonel Rodney's voice ordering his company into the cars, and he mechanically attended to his duties.

Dogging his steps everywhere he went, waiting, seeking some chance to do Dora's bidding, was her human, or inhuman, sleuth-hound, private Allan Wentworth.

## CHAPTER XXI.

A VILLAIN'S WOOLING.

META and Ella found Palm Grove a delightful retreat; and the Moreleys were very pleasant people.

The girls' duties were merely nominal, and the time passed agreeably, saving their own secret griefs, which even a paradise could not assuage.

"What a queer world this is," said Meta. "What we want we can not get, and what we detest is thrust upon us. I have been thinking of George Matthews, and what might have been, had I not refused his tempting offer. No doubt, by this time, I should be a staid matron in stiff silks and stiffer satins, with a ruffled cap on my head and a lie in my mouth for everybody."

They were strolling through the crimson-tinted woods belonging to the Moreley estate, one autumn afternoon, the crisp leaves rustling under their feet, while showers of them fell from the already half-bare limbs above them.

"Why, Meta! how strangely you talk!" exclaimed Ella, laughing.

"I feel strangely, sister mine. My thoughts are rambling here and there in the wildest confusion. I do believe that George Matthews is a villain. I have thought much about him lately, and to-day I can scarcely get him from my mind. He hated Paul. Oh, Paul! Paul! where is he, that he does not come to me?"

"Why, Meta!" exclaimed Ella, really alarmed. "What has come over you? I never knew you so before. Let us go back."

"Not yet, Ella. I will try to act like myself, but I do feel as though something dreadful will happen soon. Oh, Ella! we are not happy! I know you are not, and what would you think if I told you that I am in misery all the time? Oh, Ella, shall we ever be happy?"

Ella was shocked at this strange outburst of an overburdened heart, yet it was but the counterpart of her own feelings.

"We must bear it patiently," said she, "and be thankful it is no worse."

"Patiently!" cried Meta, chafing like a caged bird. "Patiently! I never can do that, Ella! It is killing me! Why, was it not enough to turn me into the streets! Ella, I shall go mad! Paul! I love you so, yet you are as one dead to me!"

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George Matthews laughed, a bitter chuckle of rage and derision. To hear an avowal of this love a second time—thrown in his face so mockingly—roused all the cowardly cruelty of his nature.

"Yes, call—shout—scream for him, but he will not come! He does not hear you. He has forgotten your pretty face, for he knows that—"

Meta turned a face to him whiter than death.

"Not that—not that!" she implored.

"Yes, that!" shouted the craven.

"That! I told him! He would laugh at you now. Spurn you for a—what was it that Doctor James told you? Ha! ha!"

But Meta was like a statue, rigid as the marble itself, struck senseless and motionless by the dastard's base aspersions.

"Seize them, and mount!" commanded Matthews.

And the poor girls, powerless to prevent, were hurried away.

(To be continued—Commenced in No. 23.)

Cruiser Crusoe:  
OR,  
LIFE ON A TROPIC ISLE.

BY LAFAYETTE LAFORREST.

NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN.

THERE could be no mistake about this. Nearly all savage or half-savage nations, when walking, turn the toes inward. This in part arises from their style of following and leaving a trail, always putting one foot right before the other, and leaving thus, as it were, the imprint only of a single foot. But whatever the reason, that they do it is a well-known fact.

Now this little naked, well-shaped foot, was evidently that of one who had been taught to walk, and by an European teacher.

Who could it be, who, cast on that desolate shore, had taken up her abode with savages?

But why should I be certain it was a girl? It might be the foot of a youth. As this idea flashed across my mind, the sensation of anger, despair and jealousy, which flashed across my soul was something awful. The very thought that the solitude inhabited by Pablina was shared by one of my own sex, was enough to drive me mad. And yet, what right had I to be angry that she should prefer some one else to me? It was the privilege of her sex, and why should she not exercise it?

But again my eyes fell upon the elegant footmark, and a careful examination convinced me that it was, after all, a girl, and undoubtedly one whose feet had been confined within the usual tight-fitting boots of civilized countries.

What could this mean? A wild and almost insane idea had once or twice flashed across my imagination, but had been dismissed as soon as admitted. It was impossible, it could not be true; and yet why had my misfortune, my unlucky fate, set me on my journey just at the moment when the mystery I would unravel was only deeper and more intricate?

My nature was hopeful, as a rule. During my solitary sojourn on the dismal shores of an island which, however beautiful, was without my own kind, I had, except on rare occasions, never allowed myself to despond—never found fault with Providence for suffering me to be cast away, without hope of any further contact with my fellow-creatures. But now overcome with emotions of a mixed and strange kind, I sat moody and silent.

What my thoughts were, I would rather not reveal. They were not exactly creditable to me. The discovery of which I had a faint trace did not seem to please me as much as it ought. My soul was turned toward Pablina, and any thing which interfered with my hopes with regard to her did not please me. I verily believe, as I sat in that tower, I thought myself the veriest deserted, abandoned and lost wretch that ever lived, forgetting wholly all the mercies which had been vouchsafed unto me for three years.

I was awakened from my reverie by the song of a bird, and looking up, I saw on a tree a bird the name of which I did not know, but which very much resembled a robin-redbreast.

A tear came to my eye as I gazed, and I recollected, with intense emotion, the words of a good and great traveler, who, like myself, had suffered much, and who yet had never lost heart:

"I saw myself in the midst of a vast wilderness, in the depth of the rainy season, naked and alone, surrounded by savage animals, and men still more savage. I was five hundred miles from any European settlement. My spirits began to fail me, and I thought I had no alternative but to lie down and perish. The influence of religion, however, supported me, for I was still under the protecting eye of God. At this moment, painful as my reflections were, the extraordinary beauty of a small moss in fructification caught my eye. The whole plant was not larger than the tip of one of my fingers, but I could not contemplate the delicate conformation of its roots, leaves and capsule, without admiration. Can He, thought I, who planted, watered and brought to perfection in this obscure part of the world, a thing which appears of so small importance, look with unconcern on the situations and sufferings of creatures formed after his own image? Surely not?"

I could no longer despair. I started up, and disregarding both hunger and fatigue, traveled forward, assured that relief was at hand; and I was not disappointed.

"In captivity, in solitude, in suffering, there is but one true consolation, and that is religion. He who is armed with that has sword and buckler both. He can defy the worst of enemies, and bear the most fearful troubles."

But still my soul was not altogether restored to its proper tone. Rising, then, with determination, I continued on my way, satisfied that having traced them thus far, I should again meet their trail. The way through the forest was clear. These inhabitants of the volcanic island had adopted a plan similar to that of the dwellers in the great backwoods. They had barked a tree here and there on their way. This again convinced me that there was some member of an European race of the party.

But my reflections were suddenly brought to a standstill.

I had been so deeply absorbed in my thoughts for some minutes, that I entered upon a clearing before I knew where I was; and, striking my foot against a fallen log, was tripped up.

As I fell headlong on the ground, still grasping my double-barreled gun, I heard a fearful roar, and rising, saw that I had fallen on a herd of buffalo cows and calves, which were quietly feeding on the short grass of a lovely prairie, guarded by a huge bull—one of those immense creatures that a lion will not attack alone, and which often comes off victorious in the conflict.

I leveled my gun, for I saw that he had discovered me, and was lashing himself with his tail into a state of fury; while, if he caught hold of me, my fate was certain. My hands shook somewhat, and it was my after conviction that I leaned against a tree in my agitation. This I do know—I fired.

Scarcely had I pulled the trigger, when my vision seemed obscured, except where I saw two red and bloodshot eyes fixed upon me, while the nose of the ferocious beast appeared to plow up the earth in a long furrow.

I fired my second barrel, but without effect, and the useless weapon fell at my feet.

At a glance—and the whole matter did not last two seconds—I grasped a branch of the tree, which was, as well as I could make out in my great fear and hurry, a young baobab.

With a gymnastic bound, I drew myself out of the animal's reach into the first branches of the tree, whence I hastily ascended into the topmost boughs, where, of course, I was perfectly free from any immediate danger. Taking time to draw my breath, I gazed downward. The buffalo, larger and more powerful than that of America, had posted himself beneath the tree, and appeared about to mount guard over me.

For a short time the affair seemed rather amusing than otherwise. I actually talked nonsense to the bull, and sneered at him for being taken in. But, at the end of half an hour, the matter became serious; but still I felt no great alarm, until at last I became aware that the buffalo had made up his mind to try my patience, and to starve me out, if he could not slay me.

Every now and then he would lift his head, bellow furiously, and fixing his savage eyes upon my form, which he could plainly distinguish, allow me to see that he was in earnest. Then he would move slowly round the tree, grazing in the most quiet and calm manner, but with one eye still turning upward every instant.

The cunning beast knew his power. On the skirt of a fertile prairie he had food sufficient for him, while the copious morning dew would serve him for water. I, on the other hand, must soon starve. Thirst and hunger are assailants that we can only ward off in one way.

I must escape from the tree and the animal, if I would not be starved or gored to death. But how it was to be done, was a great mystery. My thoughts suggested no remedy, however, and soon a cold shivering it proved the extent to which my danger had roused feelings of terror and alarm.

I gazed around; but no tree was near enough to admit of my leaping from one branch to another. I had heard of these animals, when guarding their seraglio, watching an enemy for days, and this bull appeared to me one of these relentless class. He never swerved from a certain circle, browsing coolly, however, all the time. His persistence alarmed me.

Then, when he appeared to have satisfied his appetite, he lay down, with his head in my direction, snorted through his huge nostrils, and prepared for a regular siege.

The cows and calves went on browsing calmly.

Something must be done, that was clear, and a bright idea suddenly flashed across my mind, and I at once determined to carry it out. I slid down the tree until I was not more than seven or eight feet from the ground. Between my teeth was my long, sharp knife. There was no time to lose—the buffalo was in the act of rising when I leaped, cleared him by a couple of feet, and, as he got to his feet, caught firmly hold of his tail.

I had heard of bull-fighters doing this, and thus saving their lives. Quick as lightning, and with furious bellowing, the bull turned round, but I was as quick as

he was. Twisting, jumping, and grasping the place above the tuft with a resolute and firm hold, I grasped my knife in my right hand. I was now a match for the huge and infuriated animal, which, as long as I kept behind him, could not harm me.

His terrible horns were useless now.

His fury was something ludicrous. Now he stood still and bellowed with vain and savage rage; then he would dart suddenly round to shake me off; then again, he would kick up his heels; but whatever he did I was too much for him. Still, this state of things could not be allowed to last, so raising my knife as high as possible, I drove at him with all my strength.

The knife went into his flanks to the very hilt, and then, bounding from the ground, he made a dash that nearly wrenched my wrist off. But I held on, aware that if I let go, he would certainly turn and gore me to death. But to end the dreadful contest, I again repeatedly stuck at him with my knife, now in one flank, now in another, according as I was tossed about.

It was a fearful race through shrubs, over a grassy plain, through a swamp, across a stream, until I came to a rugged plain. The bull had gone at a fearful pace at first, but now could not move so quickly.

I looked about. My hope was to let go suddenly, and, falling behind some thicket, hide from his view. But what is this? We are dashing down a steep declivity. The bull's head is down—his eyes are on the ground—he goes headlong. Another minute we shall be dashed over a precipitous rock. I had just time to let go and fall hastily back on the ground, when over rushed the maddened animal.

When I regained my breath, I crawled to the edge of the cliff and peered down.

The poor animal lay mangled and dead below. I was sorry for him, for he was a splendid creature; but amidst my regrets there was one satisfaction—I had done that of which I had often heard, but never thought to see—I had tailed a bull.

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